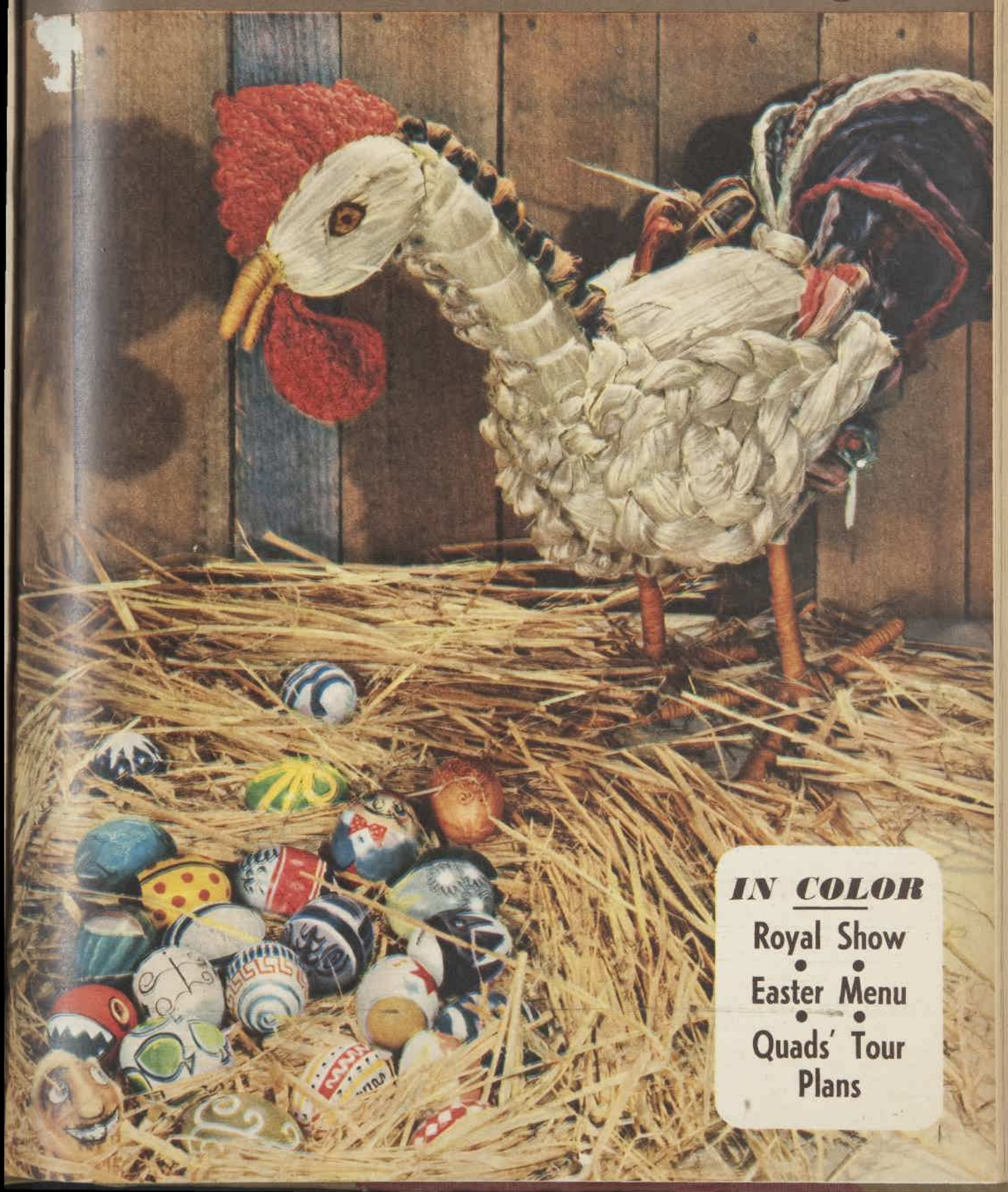
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The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

APRIL 1, 1953 — Vol. 20, No. 44

BRINGING UP FATHER

A SURVEY among Sydney delinquents showed that Father's lack of influence was twice as much to blame as Mother's.

This was the burden of an address given in Melbourne by Professor Harvey Sutton, president of the Father and Son Movement.

Professor Harvey Sutton painted a grim picture of Father.

"A shadowy servant in the social scheme," the Professor called him; a creature whose main duties were to bring home his wages and do any dirty work Mother wanted to dodge; a craven who avoided father-son talks, though Mother bravely faced the mother-daughter equivalents.

Poor old Dad; he's always getting it in the neck.

He's the breadwinner who fights the transport battle, rain or shine, every weekday. He's the housewife's most reliable dishwasher; the only cobbler in the world who doesn't get paid. There he is at the week-ends on the working end of the lawnmower.

If he's the average Dad he also mends the iron, papers the spare bedroom, builds the bookshelves, and gets breakfast on Sundays.

But this sort of donkey domesticity is not enough.

If Mum is the brains of the family, as she privately believes, she'll make Dad the family comrade he ought to be.

By artfully encouraging him in this role, she can make it the most natural thing in the world for the children to turn to him, as a friend, for help and guidance.

Our cover:

● When we wanted to illustrate Easter goings-on in the hen-house, our artists decorated 22 hard-boiled eggs—and ate two. Then we had to find a chook. The Italian raffia rooster on the cover was captured in a city store. The display manager said he would lend it, and a duck for good measure, if we took both through the city unwrapped. We did this, thinking we might stop the traffic, but we didn't score even a second look. Robert Cleland took the picture.

This week:

● In this issue we have a short story, "The Balcony," from the pen of Dorothy Eden, the New Zealand author whose mystery serial, "Voice of a Dove," we published last winter. Miss Eden, who is a farmer's daughter, lives at Christchurch, and writing has provided her with "some very good meals," as she puts it. She has had nine novels published in London and short stories in every English-speaking country and several European ones. But her greatest personal triumph came last month, from a comparatively small success—the sale of the Danish rights of her new book, "Cat's Prey." This is because of her Danish descent—her grandparents came from Copenhagen.

Another story which we publish this week, "The Old Salt," was written by Maurice Tindall, an ex-Royal Navy man who moved from England last year to Adelaide, where he is a schoolmaster. Mr. Tindall discovered a love of ships while he was serving in the Navy and of Shakespeare while studying at London University. He has written for the A.B.C. and the B.B.C., and he likes both Australia and Australians.

Next week:

● Color sketches of London streets as they will look at Coronation time will be given in our next issue. The thought of London in festival dress will have a special thrill for one particular reader, the winner of our Coronation Contest, whose name, with those of other prizewinners, will be announced next week. With a member of the family or a friend, the winner will be walking or driving along those very streets during the first week in June.

Witty advice about making life fun at forty

Book review by AINSLIE BAKER

EVERYTHING is grist to the mill of those irrepressible American sisters Mary Bard and Betty ("The Egg and I") MacDonald.

Being 40 is the latest phase of living to be given the attention of Mary's nimble typewriter.

"Forty Odd," her newest book, provides the opportunity to get off a fresh batch of the famous Bard brand of anecdotes concerning such subjects as becoming a Brownie leader, introducing pep into your cooking, reading great books, taking up the piano, and joining a reducing circle.

On the morning of Mary Bard's fortieth birthday she looks in the mirror. "It was the expression of my face, of bewildered eagerness, that finally made me fighting mad," she writes.

". . . I had been preparing for this macabre day when youth, with a callous flip of the calendar, would flit away, leaving old age to walk hand in hand with me to the grave."

The heading to the first chapter, "You don't have to be fat, frustrated, foolish, forlorn, AND forty," gives a good idea of the cheer ahead.

Readers of "The Doctor Wears Three Faces" will meet again their old friends, the Neglected Ones, that long-suffering band of doctors' wives, united in their plight.

The villain of the piece is a ski-mad, eternally youthful femme fatale called Candy, who is one of the more persistent patients of the author's doctor husband, Jim.

Most wives will agree that the final hideous fate held in store for Candy could not be more satisfactory.

There is also a truly Machiavellian child named Myrnajean, who comes to Brownie meetings in the rumpus room of the author's home attired in a cast-off velvet-and-sequin costume of her night-club entertainer sister.

Typical of the riches whisked tantalisingly briefly into the reader's ken are Mr. Billy and Mr. Charlie Lovett, Grandpa's two dear old friends.

"They are still bachelors, and seem to have dedicated their declining years to creating nostalgic pools of Edwardian courtesy by building beaver dams of fascinating reminiscences against the surging rapids of present-day speech," we are told.

If Miss Bard's muse has lost something of its first fine carefree rapture, she still remains an exceedingly funny woman, capable of witty and original observation, and possessed of a wry disenchantment.

She recaptures her top form in the chapter where she is whisked off by Candy to a ski lodge filled with suntanned young men, enormous quantities of rum, and no other women.

More seriously, it is impossible not to find disturbing certain aspects of contemporary American life referred to so light-heartedly by the author.

Published by Hammond, Hammond and Co. Our copy from Grahame Book Company, Sydney.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY

HEAD OFFICE: 168 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. Letters: Box 4098WW, G.P.O.

MELBOURNE OFFICE: Newspaper House, 247 Collins Street, Melbourne. Letters: Box 185C, G.P.O.

BRISBANE OFFICE: 81 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane. Letters: Box 409P, G.P.O.

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PREGNANCY



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Illustrated by Beck



"I'd hate to be washed out to sea with this cargo of kids," the girl laughed, as Henri started the engine.

The Secret of the Purple Reefs

JOSEPH and HENRI CHRISTOPHE return from an extended pearl-fishing expedition to Home Island in the Caribbean Sea to learn that the island's trading vessel Christophe, skippered by their brother MALCOLM, disappeared mysteriously, and two years' search has failed to discover its fate.

The loss is a terrible blow to the little community of islanders, as they depended on the ship's trading for their livelihood. They look to the Christophes, who own the island, to make good the loss.

The brothers learn that two passengers, WEBBER and ASHBY, owner and engineer of the ship Webber, which was wrecked in a hurricane, travelled to the Isle of Palms on the Christophe's last voyage and reported her two days late there. A further mystery is the disappearance of two sponge fishers, JACQUES and CHRISTIAN.

While negro TOBIAS investigates this, Joseph and Henri set out in a launch bought by great family sacrifice. They reach the wrecked Webber. NOW READ ON:

DESPITE the pounding that the ship had taken, the rupture of at least some of her oil tanks had apparently been small, for faintly iridescent oil slick still trailed from her across the reefs and out over the western deeps beyond the reefs.

"I had not realised that she was as big as she is," Joseph said. "She must have been a great loss!" He added ruefully, "At least, since she was lost in hurricane, the underwriters cannot have disputed her loss."

Outside the coral was already taking her, and from the depths astern, that were becoming murky green with shadow, the great forms of two sharks showed.

"The brasswork is still with her," Henri said. "With simple diving rigs, we might be able to do a little salvage."

"I, too, was thinking of that," Joseph agreed. "If we are to meet the debts we must make all chances earn for us."

"We might also find the chart and glance for the Three Galleons," Henri said, and grinned.

"But you are not imagining, Henri, that lost treasure was in the loss of the Christophe?"

Henri laughed. "No. It could be, but I would have to run gold and jewels through my fingers before I would believe it."

They swam back into the face of the westering sun, and behind them the wreck became a thing of gold against the eastern sky.

Henri was a natural cook, and as they reached the dunes he said, "I will go to the bay and prepare the meal."

Joseph smiled at him. "Thanks. While you do it I will walk the north horn of the dunes."

Henri knew that Joseph was troubled by the immensity of their task. As he ran across the sand crest and swam to the launch for spear, goggles, and sack, he decided that Joseph must have a very special supper.

And with the spearing equipment across his shoulder, he slid through the water like a seal towards the mouth of the bay, searching for a really choice catch.

Joseph meanwhile walked slowly and intently along the north horn of the dunes where the military installations were already being taken by the rust and the birds. As always on isolated outcroppings from vast areas of water, there were strange and interesting objects on the beach, and at one point a corked bottle caught his eye.

He picked it up, and a paper was dimly visible through the green of the glass. He broke the bottle and something tinkled among the coral rubble. The note said that the bottle had been thrown overboard from a cruise ship near Panama, and asked the finder to inform the writer of where the bottle was found; a dime being enclosed for postage.

Joseph looked for the dime, but could not find it, which annoyed him, since, though the message was trivial, it did not occur to him to disobey the instructions, and he could ill afford the stamps.

On the eastern face of the dunes was record of the fury of the storm that had swept the reefs two years ago. Great blocks of coral torn from the living structure of the reef were heaped upon the beaches and the sandhills, and Joseph considered them, thinking that in such storm things long buried could have come to light.

The great sky was becoming greenish gold and the clouds glowed angrily in the west, while the wind had caught a lonely whisper, when Henri at last heard the silken sound of Joseph's step in the sand and looked up, smiling. "We have a good supper!"

Joseph said, "The storm must have been of great violence. My only find was a tourist bottle whose dime I lost among the coral. Now I will have to spend a dime to mail the letter."

Henri suppressed a smile and served the meal deftly in smoothly opened tin cans and on sections of silk-smooth grey driftwood. Conch soup to which he had added their one can of evaporated milk was velvety and delicately delicious. And he was pleased that Joseph's tired face had lost something of its weariness.

"You are a true chef, Henri!" Joseph said.

Henri smiled so that his teeth flashed white in his sunset-reddened face. He passed his brother a piece of driftwood on which grilled shellfish were arranged on a bed of salty green sea lettuce. Next came crawfish tails, buttered and sprinkled with parsley and a dash of chilli.

"A king's feast!" Joseph said.

Henri was critical. "Each should have contained a wild

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Second instalment of a six-part serial by DOROTHY COTTRELL

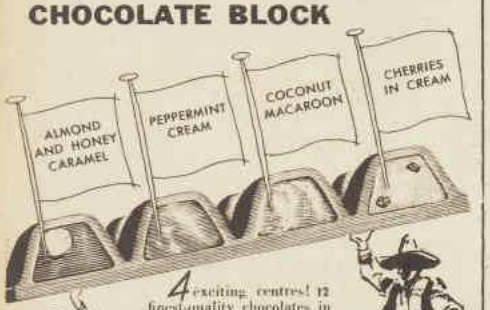
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She was quite sure romance would never come her way but suddenly she found . . .

It's never too late

By OLIVER CLAXTON

ILLUSTRATED BY MILLS

MISS BENNETT'S bender was designed to start with a ride in a taxicab, a visit to a shop for the purpose of buying something very expensive and very useless, and then to wind up with a fine high tea at the Ritz.

It all went as planned, including the high tea, but there it got out of control and, instead of being the end of the bender, turned out to be just about the beginning.

That was because a lovesick but brassy young man became mixed in her day.

In strict behaviour she should have told the young man to be gone about his business, but, on the other hand, a lady who has reached primness and mature years does not have to be too strict with a youth prancing gaily in the early twenties. Furthermore, she was on a bender.

Dressed plainly, if not demurely, with no apparent regard for fashion, Miss Bennett looked quite at home behind a tea table.

But not a tea table at the Ritz. Some quiet little place on a side street was more her style, and some quiet little place on a side street was where she had always taken her tea until this day.

Because Miss Bennett had not been possessed of money enough to make her frivolities other than the very mildest.

At a tender age she had taken up the economic struggle in the guise of governess, and as the years crept past her she had become companion to a respectable elderly lady.

There she remained until the respectable elderly lady, who had drained all dreams out of Miss Bennett in return for the fee she paid each week, died in a respectable elderly way.

She had been a good-hearted old lady and it was hardly her fault that constant, meticulous association with her had tended to blight Miss Bennett. It was merely the natural consequence that follows from the close and unrelenting contact of youth and age.

Perhaps the old lady recognised this, and maybe, also, she had a feeling for Miss Bennett, as would have been understandable, but anyway, there in her will was a clause that gave Miss Bennett a legacy.

When Miss Bennett received the news of this, she sat down with her Commonplace Book and discovered with dismay that she had almost and to all intents and purposes left a good piece of her youth behind.

Her Commonplace Book was a scrapbook, a repository for the little things that come along in life and because they are little things and commonplace are apt to leak from memory as the years go on.

Such things as poems, or minor deeds of heroism read about in the papers, or a photograph, or an anecdote, or almost any of the many things that the eye sees and the ear hears from one day's end to another.

Also it was a good place to put on record, shyly and without affront to common sense, certain hopes.

For instance, there was the somewhat faded picture of a house that had gone into the book when Miss Bennett was at the blithe age of seventeen and it represented what logical dreams youth had of a domicile when the time came to settle down.

As she went back through the Commonplace Book, Miss Bennett could only think, as she gazed at the picture, goodness, it looks somewhat like Windsor Castle.

Then there was another, pasted in later, when she had first assumed her duties with the respectable elderly lady. This was small, a country house, a cunning little place, and you could guess, from looking at it, that it had perhaps an acre of land for gardening.

Miss Bennett had glanced around the living-room of her small flat. She saw the door to the bedroom and, right across from where she sat, the door to the kitchenette. Some potted plants grew fastidiously in the window.

It is cosy here, thought Miss Bennett.

The poems reflected Miss Bennett's dwindling sense of romance. They began, way back there in her youth, with short rapturous bits touching on moonlight and love ever after, and went on from pieces having to do with friendship and companionship to the latest entrants, which were long jobs about nature and the pleasures of contemplation.

The series having to do with gentlemen was not complete. It had fallen by the wayside. Beginning with pictures of matinee idols, it went through the handsome men of the movies to—to a break at the time when a real live man crossed Miss Bennett's path.

That was about halfway through her tenure of office with the respectable elderly lady. Nothing came of it all but conversation and a trip or two to the play, and then the respectable elderly lady had stepped in and issued orders and commands, and that was the end of that.

And Miss Bennett wanted no more pictures of gentlemen in her Commonplace Book, because she had been in love, once and truly.

So, when she sat and studied the book, she learned that the fine foolish dreaming of youth was gone, and that what she wanted from life now was simple easy security.

But later, when the legacy was here in the due legal course, she found that she had one gesture left in her. She wanted one day when money was no object—in fact, one day when, merely for the fun of it, she could ignore money to the point of wasting it.

Which was the day she drove to a shop in a taxicab, and while the taxi stood outside the door, she bought a negligee—gossamer and expensive.

She did not need the negligee. She had a warm woolly wrapper she never would part with. But she did want the negligee for a trophy to hang in her wardrobe as a symbol of the day when she could pay ten pounds for something that was of no service to her whatsoever.

And then to the Ritz for high tea, because it seemed to her that the Ritz would charge her more than any other place in the city.

The room for tea was close to being empty, with only a waiter or two, herself, and a sedate couple at a table in a corner.

When she had ordered her tea and crumpets and some marmalade to put on them, she settled back to enjoy herself to the full. She glanced around the room to register every detail firmly in her mind, and as she did so the young man popped his head in the door, gaped around and took his head out of the door and disappeared.

She had noticed the young man in the lobby as she came into the hotel. He was smartly dressed and had red hair and blue eyes she thought of as merry.

She had noticed him in detail because he was standing with a bouquet in his hands, and she knew enough about contemporary youth to know that it was not every day you found one of them standing in the lobby of the Ritz wielding a bouquet.

Miss Bennett wondered how much, if anything, she had missed because no young man had handed her bunches of flowers when she was young herself.

As she spread her crumpets with the marmalade she thought of how she had always been too busy keeping body and soul together to waste time on the frivolous pleasure of——

The young man came to the door again, but did not stop. He strode right across the room to Miss Bennett's table. He bowed and held out the bouquet.

"Will you accept these from an admirer?" he asked.

"But——" started Miss Bennett.

His eyes twinkled a little. "Madam," he went on, "this is a pick-up."

He drew out the chair opposite her and sat down. He beckoned the waiter. "Another order of all that," he directed, and waved his hand at the high tea in front of Miss Bennett. "And a vase to put these flowers in while we munch."

"This is highly uncalled for," Miss Bennett protested.

He nodded in agreement. "It is also very reckless for a lady of your age and station in life—no insult intended, please; merely a facing of fact—to sit teaing away with a strange man. It would surprise me if I wasn't the man. The name is Teddy Burton."

He stood up, bowed once more, and sat down.

Miss Bennett fixed him with her sternest look. "This is an intrusion that I do not welcome," she told him.

He grinned broadly. "But I'll have you understand that, age or no age, and station in life what it may be, I will not be put out of countenance by any brassy young man. May I spread a crumpet for you?"

"You may," he answered.

So she spread the marmalade on a crumpet for him and handed it across the table. He smiled nicely and thanked her nicely, and she liked the young man.

"He has an honest face," she thought.

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"Clarissa," said Teddy standing up at the table. "I want you to meet my Aunt Mabel."

and aloud she said, "And what is the meaning of all this?"

"Clarissa," he told her. "Do you know Clarissa?"

Miss Bennett shook her head. "I do not," she answered.

"You should. She sings, and very well, too, in the Coq Noir, which is a very high-class joint, but, nonetheless, a joint. Anyway, I love Clarissa, and to-day and here I was going to give her the question. You know, the will-you-be-mine? But if you glance around there is no Clarissa."

Miss Bennett said politely, "That is too bad. Do you think she might have said yes if she had been here?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "I am afraid she would have been no harm in giving the subject a try. Clarissa, you see, has objections. I am a reporter and I go places that she does not think represent class, and I know people she thinks are not quite the right people to know, and I do things she considers hardly fit for a gentleman to do. Clarissa seems to be nuts about gentility."

"This is not what I would expect to hear about a singer."

"It is true, nonetheless. Anyway, we had an engagement for tea—and I mean tea—here at the Ritz and I brought this bouquet along to show her that I know what gentility will do if given its head. And what happens? She doesn't turn up."

"That's a shame," said Miss Bennett. "I am sure that if I were Clarissa I would certainly—turn up."

"So when I saw you alone here, I thought to myself, 'There is a fine-looking lady all by herself, and she must be lonely, and also, she looks as though, if she were Clarissa, she would not stand me up,' so here I am enjoying this tiffin with you."

"Aren't you a little put out?" Miss Bennett asked him. "Aren't you somewhat heartbroken or perhaps plain angry because the young lady did not turn up?"

He nodded one vigorous nod. "I am indeed. And after we have made our fill of these crumpets, I am going around to the Coq Noir at the dinner hour and tell Clarissa one or two things having to do with conduct."

He looked at her solemnly. "Now it is your turn. You tell me what you are doing all by yourself at the tea hour. I would expect to find you with a man of some shape or nature."

Miss Bennett, with no hesitation at all, found herself telling the young man about her legacy and her splurge that was finishing up very happily with high tea at the Ritz in the company of a personable but brassy young man.

He listened patiently at first, and then with understanding and interest, because, although Miss Bennett did not tell him about the Commonplace Book or what it had told her, he could easily surmise all that with a wise question or two dropped in as the recital went along. He found also that he liked Miss Bennett.

When Miss Bennett was through, they sat silently for a moment, because each had said what each wanted to say, and they had to cast around in their minds for a bit of general conversation.

Then Miss Bennett looked at her watch, and finding that time had gone well by, she called for the check.

The young man started to pay, but she said to him, "I told you this was my splurge, and my splurge it remains. I will pay."

When they were in the lobby of the hotel he said to her: "I think you should wind this day up with a mere touch, a suggestion, of hell-raising. Let me take you to the Coq Noir and buy you a glass of sherry."

"Well——" Miss Bennett hesitated. There was no reason why she should not go. There was no reason why she should, for that matter, either.

"And furthermore," he went on, "you will be doing me a favor. If Clarissa sees me in the company of a respectable lady like yourself, I may gain a little face."

"In that case I will go."

It was close to seven when they got into a taxi at the Ritz, and it was close to quarter past seven when they got out of the taxi at the Coq Noir.

Miss Bennett stepped to the footpath where there was a canopy leading into the place and also a sign stating that Clarissa sang for dinner and supper.

Miss Bennett looked up and down the street, and she said vaguely, "Oh, so this is the place?"

"What place?" asked the young man, somewhat surprised by her remark.

"Oh, simply a place that used to be a great annoyance to a friend of mine."

With that, she marched firmly through the door as the doorman swung it open for her.

The Coq Noir was stuffed with refinement in a night-club way. The colors of the lobby were subdued. The head-waiter who bowed to Miss Bennett was subdued.

In the main dining-room subdued lights showed subdued guests who were presided over by subdued waiters. It was all very quiet, too, and when the head-waiter snapped his fingers for attention, the snap cracked right out across the room impressively.

Teddy ordered the sherry for Miss Bennett and a Martini for himself. He looked at the empty bandstand and then at his watch.

"Any minute now," he said, "and Clarissa will plump down in front of that piano and fill your ears full of lyrical mooning about love."

Even as he spoke, a young lady crossed the dance floor. She did not have the appearance of a young lady with an abnormal desire for gentility. In fact, she looked on the

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727

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680

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730

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The Old Salt

ILLUSTRATED BY BROADHURST



By Maurice Tindall

MR. SEPTIMUS CHIPPING held the same position with the boys of St. James' Preparatory School as a roughly carved figurehead on one of those old-fashioned sailing ships held with the crew.

A prized possession, dear to the hearts of all, weatherbeaten and bruised perhaps, but holding still something of the age-old past of its former youth.

Its long life battered by the thrust of many a land-based storm, Seppy, as he was affectionately known among the pupils, had been hewn into an ancient figurehead of notable submission.

Deep jacket pockets ballasted down with treasuries of trivia ranging from sticks of chalk to confiscated pocketknives and shanghais, his chalk-dusty gown flapping from his shoulders like loosely rigged sails, Seppy would tack across the quadrangle like a top-heavy yacht with billowing spinnaker.

The two tufts of white hair above each ear—extensions of the crows-feet around his glinting eyes—caught the wind like masthead pennants.

But, in spite of the constantly askew pince-nez veering off his nose, the baggy trousers at eternal mourning of half-mast, old Seppy carried a certain dignity in his bearing, a certain something to be proud of.

As a ship's female figurehead gallantly hangs on to her last shreds of sea-corroded paint, so Seppy clung like a drowning man on a raft to this something.

This echo of the past which helped to keep his rounding shoulders a little straighter, his progress from staff-room to form-room a little more shipshape, the burning in his eyes a little brighter.

And his form-room crew would help him, unconsciously maybe, cling to these echoing memories with which he faced the buffetings of his older age.

Shakespeare's "Tempest" with its rough, unruly shipwreck would, he knew, with every succeeding year, bring the same request from his ten-year-old charges.

"Down with the topmast! Yare! Lower, lower! Bring her to try with . . ." he would intone, and his glance would creep from the well-worn volume and over the rim of his pince-nez. "A plague upon this howling . . ."

A hand would go up. He knew it would. It always did. And then another. And another.

And Seppy would hide an eager smile of satisfaction. Which one would they want this time?

"Sir, tell us about when you came round the Cape of Good Hope. That time when you had the big storm."

The Cape of Good Hope one, eh? Seppy knew it was probably one of their ways of leading him up the garden path, away from the musty, fyblown shipwreck of Alonso and Sebastian.

But he also hoped and believed that it was something more than this. Anyway, whatever it was, they did enjoy his adventures.

"Oooh yes, sir."

"Please do, sir."

The grey in his eyes would take on a lighter, twinkling hue, and he would blink uncertainly.

Yes, up the garden path, and how he loved it. Although, of course, he never would admit it, not even to himself.

"We-ell." He would clear his throat and the boys would wait expectantly. They all knew the preliminaries by heart.

"Haven't I told you that one before?"

"Oh, yes, but that was weeks and weeks ago, sir."

He would smile indulgently at the pink eagerness of the faces.

"But wouldn't you rather have the one with the submarine in the Atlantic?"

"You told us that one last week, sir."

"The one about Cape of Good Hope, sir."

"Yes, sir, Cape of Good Hope."

"Well, it doesn't come into the lesson." He would hum and haw pontifically. And his answer would always be the same.

"Ah, well, all right then, boys. All right." And Seppy would raise a gnarled hand.

"The Tempest" would be forgotten in the excitement of another tempest. A real-life tempest that actually did happen.

It might have been a long time ago, the boys probably thought, right in the war before the last one—the First World War they called it. But it was real and there were proper men in it.

And the waves would beat high and loud, the night be dark. And the gallant little destroyer, anonymously known as H.M.A.S., would be pitching and tossing and rolling and yawing her way round the Cape.

Away from the searching German battleship. And the hatches and the portholes would be battened down, the gunners alert, the captain watchful. And the low clouds would scud frightened in the moonlight.

And Seppy would take the boys back with him and he would live through it again and they would battle it with him.

The dusty classroom with its pictures, blackboards, time-tables, lists, initial-carved desks would be miraculously transformed into a rolling, heaving, turbulent destroyer.

And then, the light bright in Seppy's now youthful eyes, it would be over and he would return with the boys to the peaceful classroom.

There he would bask in the admiration of his pupils, then blink and nervously polish his pince-nez.

"Yes, well . . ." He would clip them on again. "Now, enough of that. We must get on."

He and the boys would turn reluctantly to their books once again.

But to-day, as he sailed uncertainly across the leaf-strewn quadrangle, the reflection of troubled, foam-flecked breakers darkened Seppy's eyes.

"Heard the news, chaps?" young Pembroke had said in the staff-room. "Surprise visit by Brassingham."

There were groans and expressions of disbelief from the rest of the staff and Seppy had accidentally dropped two lumps of sugar in his tea, instead of his usual one.

"Is—is that quite correct, Pembroke?" he asked falteringly, drawing his gown protectingly round his narrow chest.

Pembroke nodded. "In with the old man right now."

There was a good-natured laugh from Marlowe. "You'd better keep those sea sagas of yours hidden till he's gone, eh Seppy?"

Seppy joined in the general laughter, but there was a hollowness in his laugh and his bony fingers were shaky as he lifted the cup.

And, as he crabbed on to a true course to the haven of his form-room, his shoulders were noticeably rounded, the straightness had gone.

His eyes were dull now with the fear of an oncoming storm. The tufted white pennants lay limp as a distress signal against the side of his head.

"Oh dear! Oh dear, oh dear!" he muttered. Why couldn't they have sent some other inspector? Why did it have to be Brassingham again?

It was not that he didn't like him, it was just—it was just . . . Seppy would have been hard put to it to explain just what it was.

But Brassingham had known him during the war, had served with him in the Australian Navy. And Brassingham, Seppy realised, did not like him.

He hadn't liked him ever since he had been drafted overseas while Seppy had had to remain at the home base. Brassingham would have wished it the other way round.

Dimly he saw the boys rise as he came into the room. He sat down heavily at his desk.

Ah well, probably he wouldn't come into his class anyway. Bracing himself with this thought Seppy brightened up, but the paint on the figurehead was flaking.

"Now boys, what were we doing yesterday?"

Brassingham did come in. He came in while Seppy was reading "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Generously motioning Seppy to carry on, he darted to the back of the class and hovered there, rather like a sea-going bird of prey in the wake of a listing galleon.

Seppy read on uncertainly. Perhaps the boys wouldn't ask what he had now come to expect whenever he read the "Ancient Mariner."

No, they wouldn't ask while an inspector was in the room. They would wait until he had gone.

But Seppy underrated for once the intrepidity of a youthful mind. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a hand go up, waver, and stay up.

He bent to his task, but the hand was joined by another. He read faster and tried to ignore the signalling arms.

"Please, sir. Sir, aren't you going to tell us about that cyclone in the Pacific?"

"Yes, sir. When you were on a battleship!"

Seppy noticed Brassingham, who had been peering at the pictures on the wall, looking up.

"Later, boys, later," he said limply.

"But, sir . . ."

"Oh, by all means tell them now, Mr. Chipping," the inspector cawed menacingly. "Don't mind me at all."

Seppy looked unhappy. "We-ell." He cleared his throat. "Well, it—it doesn't come into the lesson, boys." He hummed and hawed and the boys waited.

"Ah, well, all right then, boys. All right."

But he couldn't recreate it for the boys, and the transformation scene between form-room and ship was confused and unconvincing.

There was a sense of something missing, something vital. He saw that the boys were disappointed in him and he felt a misgiving. Never before had he done so badly.

Why, it was as if he'd never even been on a ship at all.

He saw Mr. Brassingham swooping towards the front of the class.

"But this is most interesting, Mr. Chipping," he pecked viciously, and Seppy seemed to cower back. "Most interesting indeed. During the First World War that would be, would it not?"

Seppy nodded dumbly and stared at the picture of the dead albatross before him. He fumbled with his glasses and began emptying his starboard pocket of chalk.

"But, surely, Mr. Chipping," Brassingham went on remorselessly, "surely you were never at sea during that time? Isn't that right?"

Again Seppy nodded and he saw the boys' mouths fall open and their eyes widen. He also felt something between them and himself, some invisible barrier.

Mr. Brassingham beamed down from half closed eyes. "Yes, I always understood you spent the war at the naval base." He cleared his throat importantly. "Did you ever get to sea at all, Mr. Chipping?"

Seppy, his pockets hanging lower and his gown drooping listlessly in the calm wake that followed, shook his head.

"It was my age, Mr. Brassingham." There was a pleading note in his voice. "They said I was too old. They wouldn't . . ."

"I thought not. Ah, well, you were one of the lucky ones." He turned smilingly to the boys. "The sea can be a cruel mistress. I remember one time when . . ."

"Surely," went on Brassingham remorselessly, "you were never at sea!"

But the boys didn't listen to his story. All eyes were still on their listing hero.

Seppy, his shoulders hunched forward and his eyes dulled, stared vacantly at the jetsam of white chalk he had salvaged from his pocket.

As the salt of the sea corroded the bright paint of the once proud figurehead, so the salt of human nature had gnawed away at Seppy's protective coating of illusive memories.

The next morning Seppy limped across the heat of the quadrangle and into the quiet form-room. Not looking at the boys, he hitched himself slowly into the high chair and hid himself behind the raised lid of the desk.

"Get your arithmetic books out," he said, and his voice was harsh as the wind through loosened shrouds.

"Page sixteen." There were red rims round his eyes and his cheeks hung in lowered jowls.

"Now get on quietly."

There was silence for a few minutes broken only by the scratchings of pens like the chatter of wavelets along a drifting cutter. Then a hand wavered up. Another rose in support.

"Well, Timson?"

"P-please, sir, could—would you tell us about the cyclone in the Pacific again?" Timson's voice was uncertain.

Seppy blinked and smoothed down the tuft of hair over his left ear.

"Yes, sir."

"Please, sir, you didn't tell us it properly yesterday."

"No, sir." More boys were joining in now.

Seppy blew his nose loudly. The little blighters! What were they at? But they meant it! They were quite sincere.

He stuffed his handkerchief into the debris of one of the pockets and a smile played vaguely on his lips.

"W-what! In an arithmetic lesson?"

"Yes, sir. Please, sir!" The reply was in concert and with no hesitation.

"We-ell, this is rather irregular, I must say."

But he wasn't heard in the clamor. Imperceptibly his shoulders straightened and he raised a gnarled hand.

"Hmmm. Ah, well, all right then, boys. All right."

His eyes glistened as salt spray in the sharpness of the morning sun.

Once again, a proud, repainted figurehead, he beckoned his boys into the excitement of the storm-tossed waves.

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The Balcony

BY DOROTHY EDEN

IT was as she was in the middle of a pas seul that Sallie saw the top of a man's head appear over the balcony. Maintaining her attitude in sheer surprise, she exclaimed, "Who are you? Where are you going?"

The head, which was covered with thick pale biscuit-colored hair, rose a few inches higher. A pair of blue eyes beneath biscuit-colored brows rested on Sallie, and grew bright and genial.

"I'm Bill Stevens," he said, as if he were chatting to her at a party and happy to make her acquaintance. "Actually I'm removing your balcony. Or planning to." His fingers wandered experimentally over the iron fretwork.

He was unaware of Sallie's gasp of incredulity. "So you'll have to practise your dancing somewhere else." Briefly his eyes rested on Sallie's long slim legs. "If that's what you were doing."

"Of course it's what I was doing," Sallie snapped. At another time she would have resented his glance, but now she was too full of dismay to give it more than a flicker of concern.

"You can't take down the balcony," she said hotly.

He looked amused, his long, sun-browned face looking up at her quizzically.

"Why not?"

"Because it would be a monstrous thing to do."

"On the contrary."

He was at the top of a ladder, she realised, and he leaned back at a dangerous angle to survey the delicate pattern of the fretwork. "It would be a kindness. It ruins the house. Without the balcony the symmetry——"

"Bother the symmetry!" Sallie broke in. "It's nothing to do with that. It's the tradition. You don't understand. It's wrapped up in the lives of our family."

"And who is your family?" he inquired mildly. "Royalty?"

"You're laughing at me," she cried angrily. "I suppose you're the architect Daddy's been talking about. Well, he never gave you authority to take away the balcony."

"Actually he gave me authority to do whatever I considered necessary. And this is one thing that is of the first importance. Apart from being an eyesore, it isn't even safe. So if you were planning to be serenaded on moonlit nights it wouldn't have been wise to lean over too far."

"Serenaded," echoed Sallie, marvelling at how he read her thoughts.

"Yes. Like this." Slowly descending the ladder he sang mockingly, in a deep, rich baritone, "Overhead the moon is gleaming . . ."

"Don't lean over," he called, "even if you are bewitched." His voice came from farther away. "And if, in the space of the next two or three days, you have many lovers call, just throw them a rose without letting your hair hang over the edge."

Fascinated, Sallie did hang over the rickety side. (It had been rickety for as long as she could remember.)

"I don't have lovers serenading me," she shouted angrily.

He seemed a long way down, lifting up his laughing, impudent face to her.

"Then why all the fuss and bother about keeping the balcony?"

"Because my sister—because Daddy—because our family——"

Oh, it was no use talking to a rude, unsympathetic person like Mr. Bill Stevens. She would have to talk to father.

The balcony position had arisen from one of the current crises familiar to the Archer family. Lack of money. When father's book had been rejected for the sixth time he had had to admit at last that it was unlikely to make him the fortune for which, with his usual extravagant optimism, he had hoped.

He had said flatly, "We'll have to sell Fairfields," and had tugged at his moustache and had looked mildly sad, as if the remark were quite unimportant.

All her life Sallie could remember these unostentatious remarks of her father's.

"We'll have to sell another ten acres, dear," or "We'll have to sell the orchard," or, as now, "We'll have to sell the house."

Once, she was told, Fairfields had extended right past the housing estate and included the village and the church and the school. The village had been sold to pay the bequests and death duties under grandfather's will, and the odd ten-acre lots had been pared away yearly to pay for trips to India, China, and Alaska, her and Rose's schooling, expensive motor-cars, a theatre that father had once bought in the belief that he would make a fortune, a yacht which had sunk in a storm off the coast of France (father had omitted to renew the insurance), and all the sundry expenses that a gentleman, living in a civilised manner, incurred.

Of course, father was lavishly sad at each green meadow that was transformed into a block of bungalows, but he consoled himself and all the family with one of the yachting trips, or the trek to Alaska (to buy furs for mother), or the theatre that was going to make such a lot of money.

When the orchard, comprising five acres of beautiful knobbly old apple and pear trees, had had to go, however, he had at last become serious and taken stock of things.

Rose, he decided, having just come home from a particularly expensive French school, could take a secretarial course and get a job. Sallie, who was only sixteen and a little too young for a secretarial course, would have to be transferred to a cheaper school. Mother could give house-room to her rich Aunt Amelia, who was bound to die soon and leave her her fortune, and he himself would write the book that he had contemplated writing for twenty years.

The proceeds of the orchard lasted for just three years. By that time Rose had a job as a shorthand-typist and didn't seem too miserable about it, Aunt Amelia had died and left her money to charity, Sallie was nineteen and planning to be a ballet dancer, and father's book had been rejected six times.

So, father stated with casual resignation, Fairfields had to go.

If the family had acquiesced to the sales of the various rich green fields that had once been their heritage, they were certainly not acquiescent about the sale of the house.

Sallie, in incredulous horror, led the protest.

"But, Daddy, it's our home!"

"Granted, my pet. But we can get a home elsewhere. Smaller, more convenient, closer to work for you and Rose."

"Where?" mother asked flatly. Mother had a beautiful calm nature that hitherto had accepted all father's extravagant schemes in the belief that it made for peace if a wife agreed with her husband. But now even mother's round little chin was thrust out belligerently.

"Well," said father vaguely. "Chelsea, Kensington."

"Do you know how much a house in Chelsea or Kensington would cost?"

"Then Maida Vale, Putney."

"I refuse to live in Putney," Rose declared.

Father was not to be cried down. "Then a bungalow out here. We'd still be on virtually what is Fairfields land."

That was the most horrible suggestion of all. Rather than that, mother said, she would turn Fairfields into flats and go on living there. And at that father jumped up and exclaimed, "The solution! The answer to the problem. Three flats downstairs, one in the basement, and the first floor for ourselves. A constant income and the house is still ours."

So that was how it was. That was the reason for a tow-haired young man called Bill Stevens climbing a ladder up to the balcony and cold-bloodedly suggesting it had to go. The balcony that was so much a part of the life of any person born an Archer at Fairfields that one could not visualise life without it.

Sallie, still in her practising sweater and shorts, rushed through the house in search of father. She found him in the library. He was sitting with his chin in his hands staring at nothing. He might have been worrying over something, or he might be



As Sallie gaped in astonishment the young man said, "You'll have to practise your dancing somewhere else."

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It had been in the family for years and Sallie was determined no one would pull it down until the last serenade had been sung



but in dreams. With father, one never knew.

"Daddy!" she burst out. "Some horrible young man called Bill Stevens says the balcony has to go."

Father turned his far-off gaze to her. "Ah, me! The old order changeth."

It was such a profoundly silly and helpless remark that Sallie stamped her foot and exclaimed: "You're not just going to let that person ruin the house and do nothing to stop him!"

"The estimable Mr. Stevens? But he knows his job, my sweet. I've put the matter entirely in his hands. Now don't worry me with trifles. I have much more to think about. If you only knew, you see before you a desperately worried man."

At that moment mother came in asking what the argument was about, and Sallie turned appealingly to her.

"Mummie, you know how important the balcony is to Rose and me."

Mother said in her calm voice, "Surely you don't believe those old stories. For my part, I think the balcony a much over-rated piece of architecture. The house will be a great deal improved without it."

"You don't believe the stories because you weren't born an Archer," Sallie flung out. "But for me and Rose it's entirely different. Daddy, you believe them, don't you?"

Father looked judicial.

"Well—not so much as to let them alter the course of my life."

Sallie looked acutely reproachful, and mother said, "I think perhaps Sallie is a throwback to that Spanish woman, the one who started all this nonsense."

"She's got eyes one can't account for," father agreed.

"They're her only good feature," mother said. "One must be thankful to Christobal for that."

"The legends existed before Christobal," Sallie interposed. "She's only responsible for the singing one. The elopement was nothing to do with her."

"Or the suicide," put in father. "The balcony will have to be removed, if only for my own safety at the present critical time."

"Anyway, darling," said mother reasonably, "you have said so constantly that you mean to make dancing your life that you haven't time for men. So why worry whether or not anyone serenades you on the balcony?"

"It's not me so much, it's Rose," Sallie explained. "I do intend to devote my life to the ballet, but Rose has only got her typewriter. She's got to have a chance. You must see that."

"As my daughter," said father with a touch of pomposity, "Rose must be resourceful. She'll get along without the aid of such things as a balcony and a full moon."

But Rose was not particularly resourceful, Sallie knew. And for some reason she was pretending an infatuation for a young man called Tom Bridge, who drove a bus between the village and London, and who cultivated a miniature farm at week-ends.

He was entirely unsuitable for Rose, as they all agreed. But Rose was twenty-one, and if she wished to assume an infatuation they couldn't stop her. Sally interpreted it as a longing for the romance that hadn't yet happened her way.

Romance was written all over Rose, from her big blue eyes to her tiny coquettish ankles. She could look radiantly happy or lost in dreams or clouded over in misery. She was never negligible. She was always rapt in her intense secret life.

She seemed even more rapt than usual that night when they were going to bed and Sallie indignantly told her about the balcony.

"Our balcony?" she said vaguely, not turning from brushing her hair.

"Whose else?" said Sallie, rather sharply. "Our balcony, of course. And they're taking it down. The house will lose all its character."

"If you're a famous ballet dancer you'll probably get lots of balconies in your life," Rose said.

The thought was exciting. It made Sallie do several pirouettes round the room. Then she was deflated again like a bird folding its wings.

"But it's you, darling. You're only a typist and you can't make your life out of that."

"Don't forget Tom," said Rose, slowly drawing the brush down her shining hair.

"Yes, I know, but one can't be serious about him."

"Can't one?" came Rose's vague voice.

"Well, I wouldn't think so. I mean, not you."

"You don't really know Tom, Sallie. Do you think my hair's nice?"

"Don't I!" said Sallie enviously. "Look at my skimpy bit. Mother says I've got the Spanish woman's eyes. But I have to draw it back smoothly for dancing, anyway. My hair, I mean."

Suddenly she knew that it was Tom who had last admired Rose's hair, and

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that was why she had brushed it so thoughtfully.

Rose was turning back her sheets.

"It is awful about the balcony, though. I know how you feel. As if you've lost a birthright or something. But it's silly to be superstitious. Your dancing makes you that way. I have it knocked out of me by 'Dear Sir, Yours of the 14th instant to hand . . .' Hurry up and put the light out. I'm tired." She added "If the balcony has to go I really expect we'll get along without the serenade."

Sallie put the light out and got into bed and thought of Rose's hair, her creamy skin—all wasted in this adolescent dream about Tom Bridge. Because there was no one else to dream about.

And then in an inspiration the solution came to her. She was remembering the rich baritone of the architect, Bill Stevens, as he had climbed down his ladder that morning. Quite apart from anything else, he was a personable young man. And he had that lovely voice. Now, if he could be persuaded to sing to Rose her romantic future would be assured and the balcony could be pulled down. It would have served its last purpose.

It was a delicate request to make of a young man, especially when one had been rather rude to him the previous day.

Searching for him the next morning, Sallie found him meandering happily through the wilderness of the shrubbery (the last gardener had left a year ago and since then ivy and convolvulous were clinging in a passionate embrace over rhododendrons and holly bushes).

"Hullo," he said, when he saw Sallie, "I wonder when this grass was last cut."

"What's that got to do with you?"

"Everything. I'm thinking of the view from the lounge window of the downstairs right-wing flat."

Sallie shuddered. Then she resolutely pulled herself together.

"About the balcony?" she began.

"It has to go," he said with finality.

Sallie looked at his friendly face with acute dislike. There was a cluster of freckles on the end of his nose. They gave him a boyish, innocent look that was quite misleading.

"I couldn't expect you to understand how we feel about it," she said coldly. "You don't even know the legends."

"Apart from anything else," he pointed out, "it isn't safe."

"I know. You told me that yesterday." Sallie, who could never be cold for long, even to someone whom she heartily disliked, turned to him beseechingly. "I'm not asking you to leave the balcony. I'm only asking you to sing under it one night before it's pulled down."

The thick, biscuit-colored brows rose.

"But certainly. It would be a pleasure. What would you like me to sing? Tosti's 'Goodbye'? Or 'Buttons and Bows'?"

Sallie flushed furiously.

"Please understand it isn't for me. It's for my sister. She needs luck, I mean that sort of luck, more than I do."

"Come again?" Bill Stevens said, puzzled.

"Oh, it's all to do with the legend. If the daughters of the house are sung to, romantically, on the balcony, their happiness is assured. And neither Rose nor I have been sung to yet, and you're planning to pull the balcony down."

"Oh!" He looked as if he understood. But laughter was flickering in his eyes. "Why give all the happiness to Rose? Don't you require some?"

"Not that sort. I have my career. But Rose has to have romance. If only you could see her. She's so utterly beautiful."

Bill listened with gravity.

"If I do this thing for you, will my reward be a glimpse of the beautiful Rose?"

"Oh, yes. She'll go out and hear you, of course. You'd better keep in the shadows a bit so she'll think it's someone awfully romantic. Your voice is quite good, you know."

"Thank you," he said. "And if you ask me, you have a very nice shape even if you don't have Miss Rose's fantastic beauty."

"I didn't ask you," Sallie said icily. "When will you sing? To-night?"

He cleared his throat and gave one or two preliminary notes. "Yes. I feel I may be in voice to-night. Very well, Miss Sallie. Your request is granted."

"Thank you," said Sallie earnestly. "I do thank you."

It was thundery that evening. Sallie, waiting for the time to persuade Rose to come upstairs to bed (it would be so absolutely futile if Bill Stevens sang with no one to hear him), could explain her own tension. But the thunder must be responsible for everyone else's state of nerves.

Rose was making herself a nightdress. Rose sewed beautifully, and would use only the most dainty materials, with the result that the filmy pale blue garment she was working on looked like something for a honeymoon. She was sewing so diligently that mother remonstrated.

"Darling, can't you relax now? After the long day in the office, and you look so tired."

"I want to finish this to-night, mother."

"But, darling, surely——"

"I want to," Rose snapped. "Leave me alone."

Ill-temper in Rose was so unusual that mother looked alarmed.

She glanced towards father, but he was deep in the "Times," his brows knotted, his slender hands clasped tightly. He looked like that when he was doing the crossword, but Sallie could see the page he was reading was the share market.

"Is that bus driver bothering you, darling?" mother murmured.

"Don't call him that bus driver, mother. His name's Tom. And if you want to know, he is bothering me."

"Well, dear, I must say it's your own fault for encouraging him."

Father looked up.

"Those shares I bought last month have dropped fifty per cent," he said heavily.

Mother sighed deeply.

"What with your gambling, darling, and Rose's bus driver, and Sallie's passion for dancing—by the way, how long is that young man with the untidy hair going to be wandering about the house? Can't he tell us which will be our rooms and then keep out of them?"

"None of them, if this goes on, will be ours," father said grimly.

The telephone rang. He went away to answer it. There was a peal of thunder directly overhead. Sallie said to Rose, "Come to bed. I hate thunderstorms. I'm scared to go alone."

Continuing The Balcony

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Rose lifted her summer-blue eyes.

"I have to finish this first."

"But why? There's to-morrow."

Rose snapped a thread. "No, there isn't. And why do none of you like Tom?"

"We don't dislike him," mother said patiently. "We'll just never think that he would be a suitable husband for you, dear."

Rose said thoughtfully, "Yes. That's what I was afraid of."

Sallie did a few mournful steps. She heard father in the next room saying, "But that's quite disastrous. Really utterly and finally disastrous."

Disaster was so much a part of father's life that one ignored it. The urgent thing at the moment was to get Rose to bed.

At last, half an hour later, she was ready. Suddenly she was folding the finished nightgown carefully and saying, "Now I'm coming." And all at once her eyes were like stars. As if she had a premonition that to-night was to see the beginning of her romance.

"Then come on," said Sallie impatiently. It was five minutes to eleven, and at eleven Bill was to begin singing. They would still be in time.

As they went up the stairs there was another loud peal of thunder and at the same moment it began to rain. Sallie listened in dismay. Would Bill's voice be audible over the sound of the rain?

"What a downpour," said Rose. "I wonder how long it will last."

"Oh, only a few minutes." Sallie willed the rain to stop.

Surprisingly enough Rose's starriness had vanished. She looked acutely anxious, as if she knew, after all, that Bill was going to be singing to her. But all she said was, "I hate storms. They keep me awake."

Nevertheless, she got undressed very quickly and into bed, and seemed to be asleep long before Sallie had given up hope that the rain would stop.

At half-past eleven Sallie was suddenly overcome by the thought that Bill might be out there getting wetter and wetter, as he, too, waited for the downpour to cease. Or he might be singing and no one could hear. The whole scheme suddenly seemed childish and absurd. She would have to go down and find Bill and tell him to go home.

She dressed quickly, flung a mackintosh over her head, but left her feet bare. She fancied Rose stirred as she went out. It didn't matter now. It was too late.

The rain was still falling, but with less force. The grass was cool and sodden beneath her bare feet. Suddenly Sallie wanted to dance, lifting up her face to the rain, feeling the wet grass under her feet. She forced herself to creep sedately to the front of the house and to call softly, "Bill! Bill, are you there?"

He came from underneath the circular green tent of the weeping elm. His coat collar was turned up round his neck. He was very wet.

"Where's your sister?" he said. "I've been singing for half an hour."

"Oh, Bill!" Sallie cried in remorse. "We couldn't hear a thing for the rain. Rose is sound asleep and you've probably caught pneumonia. Oh, I am sorry."

Her remorse mollified him.

"I'm pretty tough and there's still to-morrow before the balcony comes down. Maybe to-morrow night the fair Rose will listen."

"Oh, Bill, you are sweet!" Sallie said, moved by his generosity. "I expect you think we're all a little mad."

"That's quite an understatement. Well, I'll get home."

"You can't go back to the village wet and cold like that. Come in and have a drink."

"Everyone gone to bed?"

"Yes, thank goodness. I can give you some of daddy's Scotch without a howl of protest."

"Scotch!" said Bill, shivering in his wet coat. "Maybe there is some sense in this house after all."

She took him into the kitchen and lit the gas fire, and Bill sat on a stool in front of it until his clothes began to steam.

His drying hair was ruffled like feathers. Sallie's fingers itched to smooth it, to feel it. The hands of the clock slipped round unnoticed by either of them.

"This house," Bill said dreamily, sipping his fourth whisky, "It's fantastic. When the balcony comes down you'll come back to real life. Perhaps it's a pity."

"You do understand," Sallie said gratefully. She curled her bare toes on the floor. She wanted to dance.

"You have such little feet," he said.

"Rose is the beauty," she said, without envy. "I only have the Spanish woman's eyes."

"Eyes are enough," he said. "With the little feet they are more than enough."

"Have another drink," said Sallie.

"You, too?"

"I shouldn't. A ballerina leads a spartan life. Sometimes I wonder if I can be spartan enough. Sometimes I want to dance and have all the other things, too. Rose is much less complicated than me. She just wants romance."

"We've drunk all your father's Scotch," Bill said.

"Never mind. Father lives for disasters. Will you sing for Rose to-morrow night?"

"I'll sing."

"I hated you yesterday. Now I think you're sweet. But you must go home. To-morrow night you shall see Rose. I promise."

Back in her room she found the note on her pillow. She read it and rubbed her eyes and read it again.

"Dear Sallie,

"You all think Tom isn't good enough for me, but I love him. I am eloping with him to-night. It has to be to-night, because to-morrow the balcony might be gone, and I prefer to go that way. It puts things right with fate. So you don't need to worry about me any more. Please make mummie and daddy see it that way.

"All my love,

"ROSE.

"P.S.: That was why I had

To page 68

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YOUTH FEATURE by Ainslie Baker

Giving back the ring

Happiness is too important to be sacrificed to "what people think." In the long run, the one who puts an end to a wobbly engagement does the right thing.

This is the opinion of a number of survivors of broken engagements.

- *A broken engagement hurts.*
- *The gossip is hard to face, too.*

THEY also agreed that public opinion made it easier for the girl than for the man to break off the engagement.

"ANY broken engagement hurts," a young matron said. "But it's how it's done that makes all the difference.

"The man I was engaged to before I met James, my husband, was really the one who wanted to break off our engagement.

"But he was tactful enough to let me be the one to do the breaking.

"An engagement broken on a mutual-consent level lets you both keep your dignity."

A girl who described herself as "forcibly disengaged" said stoically, "Anyway, all the talk is over in a couple of weeks. After that, anything you've got to bear is a private matter.

"You'd be surprised how soon people find something else to talk about.

"Of course, I feel as though the world has ended — but that's my business, and I dare say one day I'll get over it.

"If the man I love didn't love me, then I'm glad he told me. He'd have let me see it some day, and I might just as well start getting over him now."

"I FEEL bad about the way I broke my engagement," a young bachelor said. "I just more or less faded out — ceased to telephone, broke appointments, and generally took myself out of the picture.

"I've never ceased to regret that I showed so little moral courage and that I humiliated Jean in a quite unnecessary way."

Tom and Valerie, whose engagement ended a year ago, are now sufficiently sensible to discuss the matter objectively.

"I don't mind confessing it threw me when Valerie told me she wanted to break it off," Tom said.

"I thought she was fickle and heartless, and for a couple of months I walked round the town with a chip the size of a log on my shoulder.

"Then one night a chap I used to go to school with asked me home for dinner. He and his wife tried to put up a good show, but by 10 o'clock I could see that old Frank and Nancy should never have been married.

"Their marriage was exactly the sort of thing Valerie's and mine could have become if she hadn't had the good sense and courage to tell me.

"I was hurt at first — my pride mostly suffered, I think. But now I know Valerie was right, and I'm grateful to her."

Valerie is a chic and rather startling brunette—not at all the sort of girl you'd expect to win a certificate of merit for the strength of character and commonsense it takes to say to one's fiance, "It's all a mistake."

But it seems she never hesitated in telling Tom once she was convinced that their planned marriage wouldn't work.



"My mother likes you, my father likes you, my little brother likes you. Unfortunately, that brings us to me."

Valerie is not married yet. Like so many children of unhappy marriages, she expects a lot from her own.

"Oh, I suppose Tom and I could have got along in a sort of way," she said. "But I don't want a marriage that has got to be made to work.

"I know Tom will make someone a good husband one day, but we would never have been happy together—or not what I call happy, anyway."

BRIDGET and Mack very nearly went the way of Tom's friends Frank and Nancy.

They'd been engaged to be married for 18 months when Mack realised that gentle but long-applied family pressure had made them mistake comradeship for love.

It must also be said that, slightly predating this, Mack had met a girl who made him think about love in quite a different way.

"No man wants to let a girl down," Mack said of those weeks of indecision before he finally had the talk to Bridget that led to the breaking of their engagement.

"I tried to look at the matter dispassionately, weighing up exactly what was to be lost and what gained.

"Bridget hadn't bought a trousseau or anything, there was no question of a house half built or wedding presents to be returned. We hadn't even seriously spoken of a date for the wedding.

"We had a talk and went over the whole situation as it affected the two of us.

"I never got such a surprise in my life.

"Bridget had been feeling uneasy for months about marrying me, but was too frightened of hurting me to have a showdown.

"If I hadn't spoken up we'd have been paying for her timidity for the rest of our days."

DISC DIGEST

CONTINUING in the tradition of her late father, Queen Elizabeth broadcast "A Christmas Message" last year, and it is now available on H.M.V. REA4106. Its keynote is humility and endearing simplicity. One almost feels that one knows Her Majesty after hearing her friendly, natural voice so intimately on record.

★ ★ ★

FROM her new film Betty Hutton sings that dear old favorite, "Jealous," on EA4104. Miss Dynamite takes it straight and turns in a better job than many a big-time recording thrush. Flip is the film title song, "Somebody Loves Me," one of Gershwin's most appealing tunes, but a little less "expression" and faster tempo would have been an improvement, Betty.

★ ★ ★

LATEST newcomer to the parade of big, plushy bands is Camarata, formerly "Toots" Camarata, trumpet with Jimmy Dorsey's outfit. He debuts on DO70017, bracketing "Who Knows?" and "Mademoiselle." Also as ornate as a wedding cake is Mantovani's offering of "It Happened In Monterrey" and "Was It a Dream?" on Y6438. The boys really paint the lily, because such super tunes would sound well even played on a bazooka.

★ ★ ★

NOW I've heard everything —Edmundo Ros playing "Tipperary Samba!" Shillelaghs and maracas just don't go together, but the backing to Y6411, "The Cheeky Parakeet," is much more in character. If you're a samba addict you'll cut many a rug to this.

★ ★ ★

GOOD news for Benny Goodman fans! There are two new recordings by his orchestra on DO3562 — their wartime favorite "South of the Border" and the famous "Muskrat Ramble." There's some really exciting playing and the recording is rich and full.

—BERNARD FLETCHER.

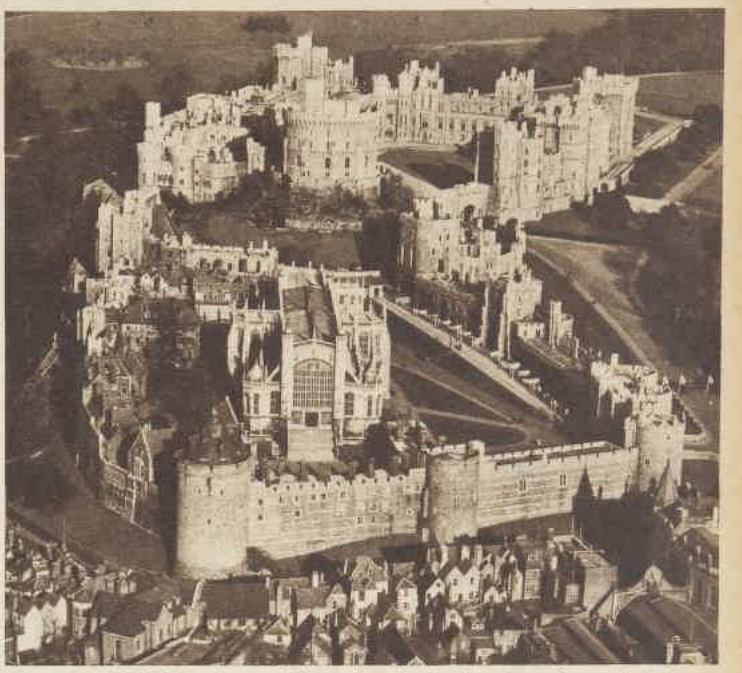
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Castle where a Princess fell in love

The Queen grew up in old Royal Windsor fortress

Historic Windsor Castle saw the beginning of the Queen's romance, and in Royal circles it is whispered that it was at the castle her future husband kissed her for the first time, writes Margaret Saville in this excerpt from her book "Our Queen."

By MARGARET SAVILLE



ROYAL RESIDENCE for the past 900 years, Windsor Castle is shown photographed from the air. At left, behind the outer wall, is St. George's Chapel, where the Kings of England are now buried. The town of Windsor has grown outside the ancient walls.

IT was at Windsor Castle, about 30 miles from London, that the Queen, then Princess Elizabeth, acted in a charity pantomime one wartime Christmas, and, meeting members of the audience later, came face to face with Prince Philip of Greece, whom she had not seen since their childhood days.

She danced with him and promised to write to him while he was away on naval service. This she did, sitting at the same little desk which Queen Victoria always used.

And it has been discreetly whispered that it was during a brilliant post-war ball held in the castle that the blond sailor Prince kissed his Princess for the first time.

Like her ancestor Queen Victoria, the Queen is very fond of Windsor Castle. She knows the ancient fortress extremely well, for during the war the young Princess Elizabeth and her sister, Princess Margaret, were evacuated from London to the greater safety of the castle.

They were accommodated in one of the towers, conveniently near the deep underground vaults that made an ideal air-raid shelter.

It was here at Windsor that the Queen grew up, studying with her governess and special tutors, who came across from Eton College nearby.

She learned to perform the deep Court curtsy before the enormous mirrors in the castle's Rubens Room, and held her teenage tea-parties in its Crimson Drawing-room—a rather shy hostess until she grew accustomed to her duties.

Easter house-party

NOW the Queen goes into residence at Windsor Castle several times a year, entertaining a large house-party during Easter Week and again for the Ascot races in June.

Then the famous State Apartments, which are open to the public at other seasons, are closed off to become the Queen's own rooms again.

The suite in the Victoria Tower, with its wonderful views over the River Thames, is prepared for the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, while one quaint blue and gilt room, with old-fashioned mahogany furniture, becomes the temporary day nursery for Prince Charles and Princess Anne.

Entertaining at Windsor Castle is formal and very ceremonious. Every night except Sunday the Queen holds a dinner-party for up to 20 guests.

They gather in the Audience Chamber, with its wonderful wood carvings that are the supreme masterpieces of Grinling Gibbons, everybody rising to bow or curtsy as the Queen appears with the Duke of Edinburgh and other members of the Royal Family.

After she has walked round greeting her guests, sherry and cocktails are served, and presently the Queen leads the procession along the great corridor into the panelled, white-and-gold State dining-room and takes her chair at the head of the massive table that has seen so many brilliant Royal banquets.

But Royal Windsor is much more than the historical castle with all its splendors. It is the Queen's estate, comprising thousands of acres of woodlands and parks.

Near the castle, down the Long Walk, with its 2000 trees in perfect line, are large kitchen gardens and glass-houses and a dairy farm with a herd of pedigree cattle and hundreds of poultry and a model piggery.

This section of the estate supplies most of the domestic needs of Buckingham Palace, a big, blue van leaving the castle grounds early every morning with the fresh produce.

Among the various smaller houses at Royal Windsor, near the modern village recently built for the estate employees, is the Royal Lodge, which the Queen uses as her week-end cottage.

Secluded among impenetrable plantations, with one large iron gate, the Lodge is an old-world place painted white outside and kept light and cheerful within. It is not in any sense a show place. It is first and foremost a home.

The Queen likes to go down to the Lodge on Saturday afternoon, after she has completed all her official duties.

Duke at wheel

SHE goes quite informally, usually in the Duke of Edinburgh's saloon car with her husband at the wheel, taking only her maid, Ruby Macdonald, although the Scotland Yard detective who guards her is inevitably in close attendance for the drive.

There are three permanent servants at the Royal Lodge, and they look after the Queen when she is there.

The main room at the Lodge is known as the salon, and is a combination of lounge and drawing-room.

The Queen recently had it redecorated in a soft, pale apricot color. Here are deep easy chairs and the Queen's ebony piano, and shelves of well-read books in gay covers, and vases of flowers the Queen likes to arrange herself.

As the upper rooms are all rather small, the Queen and the Duke have their bedrooms on the ground floor, too.

Prince Charles and Princess Anne share a tiny nursery suite upstairs when they are staying in the house, but they rarely accompany their parents at week-ends. The Queen thinks children should not have their familiar surroundings changed for short periods.

It was the Queen Mother, an enthusiastic gardener and well-informed botanist, who originally created the beautiful grounds in which the Lodge is set.

Whenever the weather permits, the Queen likes to spend most of her time there out of doors, to get the fresh air and exercise she cannot obtain in town.

Often she and the Duke will go out riding, along the ancient ways in Windsor Great Park beyond the Lodge gates, just as monarchs have done for so many hundreds of years.

Sometimes the Royal couple will stroll across to the estate village to watch a cricket or football match in progress between the local Windsor teams.

Occasionally they go for a picnic on the banks of the Thames, near Frogmal, taking their meal with them in a basket in the car and making tea over a small spirit-stove.

The Queen also likes to pay a visit to her aviary in the Lodge grounds. Here she keeps her budgerigars, which have won her many prizes at national cage-bird shows.

When she was 16, a friend gave her a pair of these birds as a birthday present, and she became so attached to them that she has bred them as a hobby ever since.

No guest rooms

NO guests outside the Royal Family circle are entertained at Royal Lodge; there is no accommodation for them, because the house has only four main bedrooms.

Occasionally the Duchess of Kent and her children or some particularly intimate friends will drive over to lunch or tea on Sunday.

In summer both these meals are served out on the terrace, which has chintz-covered chairs and lounges and small yellow-painted tables.

Even at the Royal Lodge the telephone frequently summons the Queen, and the red boxes of State papers arrive for her attention after tea each day; but she is able to relax in some measure, to enjoy her husband's companionship, to walk in the garden singing to herself—a girlish habit she still retains—to romp with her dogs and fill her big rustic basket with flowers.

THE END.

One million pounds needed for famous Abbey



CHOIR BOYS walk through the cloisters at historic old Westminster Abbey, London, where the Queen will be crowned on June 2. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, recently opened an appeal for funds to restore the Abbey.

From MARCIA PICKARD, in London

Queen Elizabeth II, whose coronation in June will show Westminster Abbey in all its splendor, was the first subscriber to the £1,000,000 appeal for funds recently opened by the Dean and Chapter of the Abbey.

AS they watch the corrosion of the fabric of the famous Abbey in the polluted London air, the clergy of Westminster fear that this parish church of the English-speaking people will one day crumble disastrously and irreparably.

Their target of £1,000,000 is to make the Abbey secure; it is not so much an appeal for restoration as for preservation.

The Dean of Westminster, Dr. Don, a Scotsman, says this appeal is "short and sharp for Coronation Year." The surveyor of the Abbey's fabric, Mr. Stephen Dykes Bower, says the time has come to choose between progressive deterioration or the safeguarding of a superb building.

When the British Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, launched the appeal for funds he no doubt had in mind the transformed interior and magnificent spectacle of the Abbey on a coronation day.

Westminster Abbey has been the scene of the crowning of 38 reigning sovereigns since the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066.

Queen Elizabeth II will be the twenty-eighth sovereign to be crowned in the Abbey as it now exists. She will be the sixth reigning Queen of England to be crowned there.

The Rev. Howard Hollis, of Melbourne, who is now one of the Abbey's minor canons, will take part in the Coronation service. He is a graduate in music from Melbourne University.

He and his wife, a flautist (who was formerly Margaret Piesse, of Melbourne), and their eight-year-old son, Julian, will travel to Australia after the Coronation to help raise money for the appeal.

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FS3-2

Worth Reporting

ONE of the highest paid photographers in the world, Eliot Elisofon, told a New York reporter that he would rather photograph gorillas than glamor girls.

Mr. Elisofon has photographed gorillas in Africa's Mountains of the Moon and glamor girls in dressing-rooms and on movie sets.

"With a gorilla the only thing you have to worry about is sudden death," he said. "In taking pictures of girls I have often reached the point of torture where I've felt death would have been a welcome release."

His feelings on this subject were intensified by his experience in Paris photographing the cast of the film "Moulin Rouge." He found beautiful Zsa Zsa Gabor the most trying of all.

"Miss Gabor is what I call the 'idea type'," he said. "She seemed to feel that I was there to photograph no one else, and she was always bouncing round with new suggestions for pictures of herself."

Another worry to Mr. Elisofon is what he calls the "my-best-side glamor girl."

"Hedy Lamarr is an outstanding example," he said.

"One side of her face is not to be photographed, and that's that. Don't ask me why. It looks all right to me.

"Gorillas don't quibble about things like that. They just want to get the job over quickly. And so does the photographer."

★ ★ ★

AN elderly woman approached a Sydney fruit barrow the other day. The barrowman was doing a roaring trade in cheap peaches, selling them in dozen and two dozen lots.

"I'd like three peaches," she said gently. The barrowman looked at her in astonishment. "Three peaches, Madam?" he asked loudly, one eye on his audience, "THREE peaches?" (with heavy sarcasm). "Why, Madam, I'll GIVE you three peaches."

"How very kind of you," answered his customer, with a poker face. "In that case I'll have these three big ones. Have you a bag?"

The barrowman goggled, meekly handed over a bag. The crowd cheered.



"Oh, hello, dear. When will dinner be ready?"

THE backslapping extrovert is more likely to be far-sighted than short-sighted, according to Dr. James F. Wahl, president of the American Optometric Association. The reverse is true of the quiet introvert. Other statements made by Dr. Wahl on the relationship of eyesight and personality: High marks in school and short-sightedness often go together, because the short-sighted child is shut off from many sports which distract other pupils.

Great-grandmother is keen hiker

A GREAT-GRANDMOTHER at 64, Mrs. S. Martin, of Brisbane, is an enthusiastic hiker, and can still do a steady 15 miles a day.

"I hadn't the opportunity when I was younger," she said, "but 17 years ago I started my hiking trips with a walk through Tasmania.

"Since then I have been to many parts of Australia. Sometimes I am away for six months at a time. This year I hope to do a trip from Broken Hill into Central Australia."

The last big trip Mrs. Martin made was as one of seven women in a party from the Queensland branch of the Royal Geographical Society which visited the Carnarvon Ranges in Southern Queensland.

Members of the party met at Injune, and from there travelled by blitz waggon, packhorse, and on foot to their base camp.

From the base camp they made one-day journeys to caves in the ranges to see aboriginal rock paintings.

A FATHER we know arrived home the other night with a bell-trimmed pale blue ribbon for his little boy's pet cat.

"Marvellous idea," said the mother. "But not for the cat."

She put it round the little boy's neck and reports it as a splendid device for keeping an ear on a toddler.

LONDON TALK
By Michael Plant

HAPPIEST man in London is Sydney Piddington. His wife, Lesley, is expecting a baby in July and they have found an unfurnished flat without key money.

Sydney, who, with Lesley, became famous for his thought-transference act in Australia and abroad, is now an executive in a theatrical agency.

He told me that he has put Sydney singer Shirley Abicair under contract. After only two appearances on the B.B.C. Shirley has been offered her own television programme. It looks as if she is following in Joy Nichols' footsteps.

★ ★ ★

A DUMMY set of Coronation robes has arrived at Buckingham Palace. Although made of cheap velvet, they are specially padded to weigh the same as those the Queen will wear in June.

These are intended for fittings, and also for practice wear for Her Majesty, saving any possible damage to the precious purple velvet which has been specially woven for her Coronation robes.

Afterwards the dummy robes will be used for curtains in Princess Margaret's new apartment in Clarence House.

★ ★ ★

AUSTRALIAN author Paul Brickhill tells me he is going to the island of Jersey to live in a cave to finish his new book.

"It's the only way I ever get a new book finished," he said. "London is the worst place in the world to try to write a book."

The new book is about legless pilot Douglas Bader, one of the heroes of the Battle of Britain.

When it is published, Paul and his mannequin wife, Margot, plan to return to Australia, buy a little house at Palm Beach, N.S.W., "and just lie in the sun."

★ ★ ★

THE Duke of Edinburgh has been made an honorary "Savage" — a member of the literary and artistic Savage Club. At a dinner in his honor, members presented him with the club tie, yellow and blue stripes on a black background.

The Duke removed the black tie he was wearing with his dinner jacket and tried on the new one.

He admitted that he was not quite sure of his qualifications for joining the club, but said that he did sometimes alter prepared speeches and put in bits of his own. This, he thought, might at a pinch count as original literary work.

Coronation Contest RESULTS

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MRS. ROLAND CHORLEY bunches gladioli in the cool room, with daughter Elaine and son Barry. Barry, who is a keen cricketer, helps with the job before leaving for a match with the local team. Elaine plays tennis and dances with the Wandin Younger Set.

Big gladiolus farm is family affair

By SUSAN BARRIE, staff reporter

British migrant brothers Roland and Cecil Chorley own and run the biggest gladiolus farm in the Southern Hemisphere at Wandin, 33 miles east of Melbourne, in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges.

WITH the help of their wives and the older children of both families they cultivate 82 acres of rich land, 14 of which produce more than 3000 gladiolus blooms a week for Melbourne markets.

"It's a seven-day-a-week job, but it's also a labor of love," Roland Chorley said.

The whole family echo his sentiments. His cheery wife, Edith, who "likes everything that grows," said happily:

"Nine years ago Roly didn't know a gladiolus from a dahlia—and now look at him! He loves the flowers as much as I do, and knows more than 400 varieties by name."

Edith Chorley certainly loves gladioli. Her holidays are mainly arranged to coincide with the shows she enters. She will enter an exhibit of gladioli and delphiniums at the Royal Show in Sydney this Easter.

Cecil Chorley—Tubby to his friends and family—is in charge of marketing, and leaves Wandin four days a week at 4 a.m. in an insulated van loaded with flowers for Melbourne florists.

His wife, Iris, is also on the job early, helping her sister-in-law to bunch the flowers stored overnight in a specially built pise (mud-walled) room which keeps a temperature of 54 to 57 degrees even on the hottest days.

Young people help

MR. and Mrs. Chorley's teenage son and daughter, Barry and Elaine, help their parents on the farm.

Pretty, curly-haired Elaine took a business course by correspondence so that she could do her father's secretarial work. She is an expert cook, and also t kes her turn at sorting and bunching the flowers.

Six-foot Barry, 16, is "farm happy," and scouts any suggestion that he should take a city job. He does most of the tractor work.

Phillip and Michael, school-age sons of Tubby and Iris, are still too young to take a hand in the work.

The three summer months, December, January, and February, when the gladioli are in full bloom, are taken up with picking and marketing the flowers.

But the rest of the year devoted to bulb production means unceasing labor and big business for the Chorleys.

They buy the original bulbs from local hybridists, and produce a million bulbs a year for sale in Australia and export to America, Canada, the Philippines, India, New Zealand England, Malaya, and Ceylon.

Gladioli are planted in rows 18 inches apart with four rows to a bed. Thirty inches separate the beds, so that tractors can be used to cultivate and spray.

Main menace to the gladiolus crop is thrip, so Roland Chorley sprays the crop two or three times during the season, using a specially prepared D.D.T. garden spray.

Lifting and cleaning the bulbs after harvest is hard work for the Chorleys. About 10 local women are employed for three months at the time. The rest of the year their only outside help is from Stan Cooper, a neighbor.

Roland Chorley takes special pride in launching new Australian varieties of gladioli overseas.

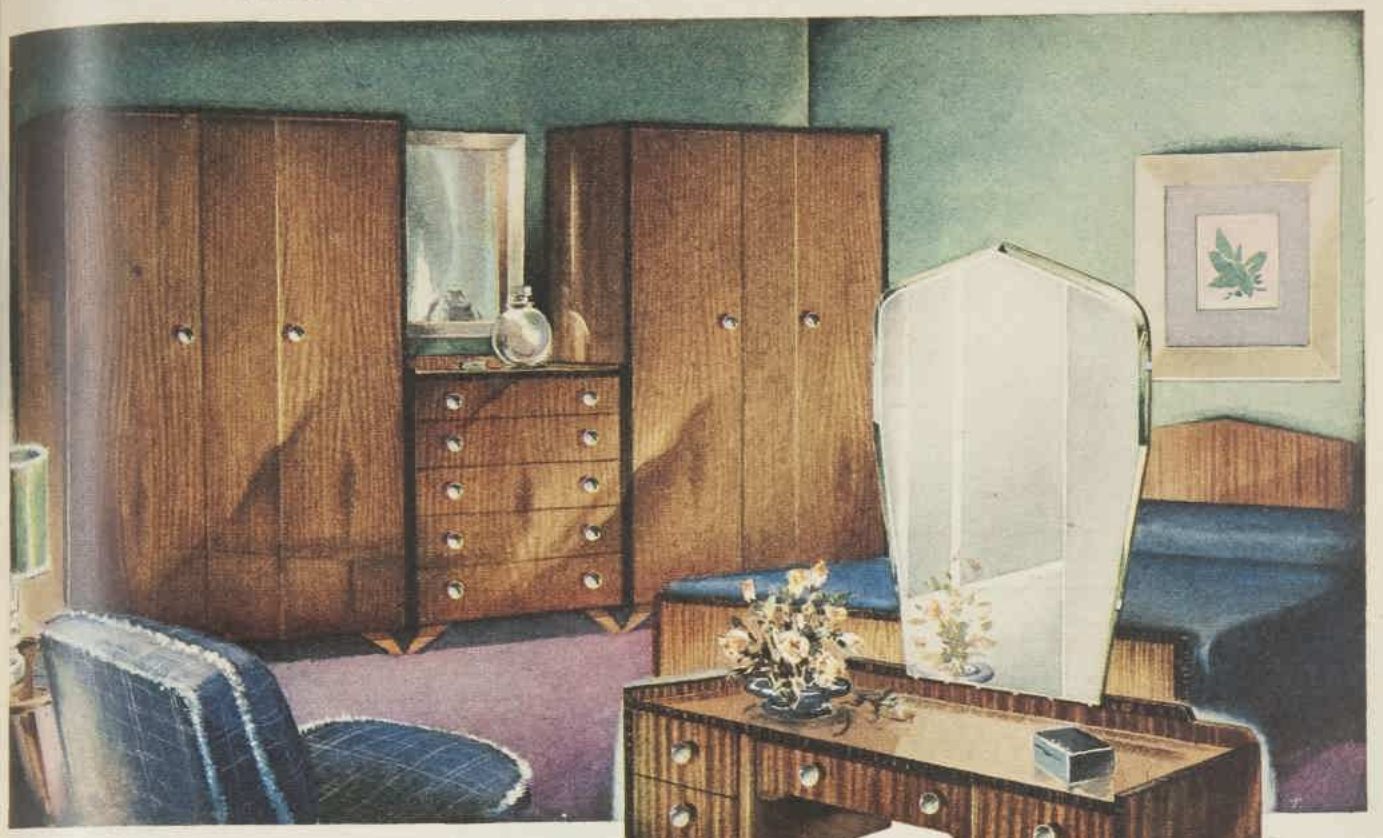
He predicts that Elizabeth the Queen, a lavender, heavily ruffled variety, will be in great demand this year.



GLADIOLUS-GROWERS Roland and Edith Chorley, of Wandin, Victoria, inspect rows of Evangeline, a delicate pastel gladiolus which is a best-seller in flower shops.

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PANORAMA OF THE ROYAL SHOW

● Easter is Show time in Sydney, when visitors from all over Australia are attracted to the Showground. More than a million people are expected to attend this year. Main spectacle is the Grand Parade (pictured above), in which more than 2000 head of prize stock are displayed in the ring. The 23,820 entries this year are a record.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW of the whole of the Showground is obtained from the top of the ferris wheel (below), which is one of the sideshow attractions again this year.



PICNIC MEALS on the Showground lawns are part of the fun for the thousands of families who like to make their visit to the Show a whole-day outing. The Show opened on March 27 and will continue until April 7. It is expected that last year's attendance of 1,043,006 people will be exceeded this year.

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fur news

Remember our little Edgecliff Salon!



Yes, that's right . . . the one where we first started! If you're an old Cornelius customer, you probably bought your first fur there . . . It's a dear little salon, but for the past few years it has played the sober role of "WAREHOUSE". However, we're now dusting down the shelves, hoovering the carpet and polishing the mirrors . . . Edgecliff is open for business once more. We'd like you to meet Mr. Read and talk over any fur problems you have. From choosing a new fur to renovating an old one, he'll give you an expert's help. By the way, have you ever shopped at Edgecliff? It's wonderfully quiet . . . no mad hustle-bustle . . . no noisy hubbub—and, best of all, no parking police!

Coming to Sydney for Easter?

Then be sure to look out your old fur and pop it in your suitcase. Make an appointment to ask Mrs. Cornelius' personal advice on re-modelling . . . Even if the fur is moth-eaten in parts, she'll be able to suggest a clever way of making the most of that precious little bit of fur. Every fur has to pass a rigid skin test before we can consider re-modelling . . . so you can be sure of getting years more wear out of a Cornelius re-modelled fur. Remember, our experts can match skins . . . dye faded fur to its original glowing colour . . . and restore the lustrous sheen that makes a fur look brand new. WIZARDS! But, of course!

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It's a dual service that has proved a blessing to many country clients. If you want any of the furs on this page, just drop us a postal note for £3 . . . or see your nearest country salon. If you have any queries at all, drop a letter to Mr. Cornelius. He'll answer personally.

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Country shows are testing grounds



CATTLE RING at Robertson Show, N.S.W., attracts young and old during judging. Other typical country show attractions were trotting, jumping, woodchopping, and equestrian events. Competitors' success at country shows may lead later to prizes at the Royal Easter Show, now being held in Sydney.



Local champions may later win R.A.S. blue ribbons in Sydney

Behind the magnificent spectacle, the wealth and abundance of Sydney's Royal Easter Show lie all the little country shows with their triumphs and disappointments, hard work, and rewards.

By AINSLIE BAKER, staff reporter

FOR these—the 200 country shows of New South Wales—are the real testing ground and dress rehearsal for the mighty Royal Easter Show.

Some are one-day affairs and are seldom heard of outside their own districts. Others, running to a tightly packed four days, enjoy State-wide renown.

In their rings begins, for the horses and cattle, the judging that could lead to a championship ribbon in Sydney.

On the tracks of some, trotters gradually attain the pace that is needed to "crack the jackpot" at Easter. Preserves and handwork displayed first in modest country pavilions can go on to be best of their class at the Royal Easter Show.

In their programmes of ring events, country shows have recently added glamor with a new contest, the Olympic hurdle race, for which the Royal Agricultural Society lends a set of hurdles conforming to Olympic Games standards.

These hurdles are placed at acute angles across the track, and necessitate higher jumping and more skilful riding than the ordinary hurdles.

Good entertainment

YOUNG men and girls delight in trying their skill—and that of their horses—in this new contest, and the show crowds enjoy watching them. "A very good entertainment," is the spectators' comment as they leave the stands at the end of the programme.

To the professional show rider, jumper, and driver of trotters, failure or success in the Sydney ring is the climax to months of carefully timed preparation and showing.

To those who work the South Coast and Tablelands circuit (unique in New South Wales for the continuity of its shows) the competitive show year begins at Bulli on January 1.

Almost three months—and 14 shows—later, Picton is the last lap on the long circuit leading to Sydney.

Shows competed in have been held at Woonona, Albion Park, Dapto, Kiama, Berry, Nowra, Kangaroo Valley, Wollongong, Moss Vale, Bowral, Camden, and Robertson.

All this time horses are improving in their work, gaining added showring polish, and their exhibitors are correcting faults and perfecting judgment.

Far from growing stale, horses and exhibitors thrive on the constant competitive work offered by the circuit.

When the circuit schedule permits, those with big strings of jumpers and trotters like to spend a few days camping at the next showground.

This enables gear and clothes to be repaired and horses and riders to become accustomed to new surroundings, jumps, and trotting track.

Countrywomen, long renowned as cooks, regard their local shows as the year's great test of their housewifely ability. For months beforehand they discuss recipes and practise their cake-making with trial baking days in their own kitchens so that their entry will be cooked to perfection.

Recently the show circuit regulars made the climb up the Macquarie Pass from Wollongong to Robertson, there to camp in horse-floats, caravans, and trailers for Robertson's two-day, 74th annual show.

With a big display of cattle, horses, horticultural, farm, and dairy produce, cookery and homecraft classes, and wood-chopping events, picturesque Robertson provides a true dress-rehearsal for the Royal Easter Show.

On the first afternoon of its 1953 show a thick, white fog blew in from the coast, and by mid-afternoon had reduced visibility to a matter of yards.

Yet still the jumpers went over the blurred hurdles and the hacks delicately figure-eighted in the obscuring mist.

At last one by one the car lights went on and the spectators moved off homewards. The gleam of little fires began to appear outside the groups of horse-floats and trailers.

Long journey home

THERE was a jangle of stirrup-irons as competitors from surrounding districts moved off with their strings of horses on the long ride home.

The clank of buckets sounded across the deserted ground as young riders, their moist clothing clinging to their backs, carried water and feed to their horses.

Out of the darkening white there appeared the figures of girls and men, hatless in the soaking mist, their arms full of newly mown grass to bed down the horses.

Then at last only the sound of contented munching came from the range of open-sided horse-stalls. Young men with towels over their arms walked to taps; lights burned yellow in the caravans of the side-showmen. The smell of cooking drifted from the family trailers.

For the young men who ride and drive the show horses, the night was yet to begin.

"Gee, he's even got a white shirt!", "Who's coming down to town for fish and chips?", "You've had it, boy, if you aren't coming down to the hop," came from the open horse-stalls used by the young bloods as bedrooms.

It was just another night on the show circuit.



MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR at Robertson, Mr. H. Norman, of Moss Vale (second from right), is congratulated by daughter Joan and stewards A. Saxton (left) and C. Scarlett.

EIGHTEEN-MONTHS-OLD BULL Fairymead Prince Arthur, belonging to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's Hereford stud at Mittagong, N.S.W., faces the camera with confidence. He is now at the Royal Easter Show.



ZADARAN, white Arab stallion owned by Mr. J. E. Lock, of "Brookburn" stud, Bowral, N.S.W., loves motoring and runs eagerly up the ramp to the float that takes him to shows. If Mr. Lock gives the word he will back down again.

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He makes furniture from match sticks

By SHEILA PATRICK, staff reporter

Some people occupy their spare time reading, others have stamp collections, but Mr. Neville Smith, 31, of North Sydney, N.S.W., makes furniture from match sticks.

Mr. Smith told me this when I asked him about his entry in the "any other article" division of the arts and handcrafts section of the Royal Easter Show.

MR. SMITH'S "any other article" is a full-size cocktail cabinet made entirely from nearly 400,000 matches.

I tried to contact Mr. Smith for nearly a week, but each time I rang he was out fishing.

After I eventually tracked him down, he said he would see me at his parents' home at Turramurra, where he kept his match-stick furniture.

I travelled the 15 miles to Turramurra by car. Mr. Smith went on his bike "to keep in condition."

He was wearing special bicycling shorts and shoes for the interview.

"I nearly couldn't come," he told me. "I thought I was going away to Wellington with the North Sydney grade cricket team, but the trip is to be next week, so I can spare you a little time."

He led the way into the room, where there were the results of years of labor — a large cocktail cabinet (his R.A.S. Show entry), a clock in the form of a railway engine, a traymobile, and a radio cabinet.

"The cocktail cabinet took 381,000 matches, the clock 31,400, the traymobile 61,000, and the radio 71,000," he said.

"They are all solid matches, too."

Mr. Smith knocked against the cocktail cabinet and opened all the doors.

"I have about a dozen people collecting matches for me and have used about half a million matches in all my jobs," he added.

"My most enthusiastic collector was the late Mr. John Whittle, J.P., of Willoughby, who died recently. He was wonderful and gave me many kerosene tins full."

Mr. Smith explained how he came to take up his hobby.

"I was in hospital in 1939 after a bad bike smash," he grinned. "I was doing some training runs and hit something.

Clock "like engine"

"IN hospital I read about a clock being made like an engine from Canadian timber. I wanted to make one like it, but I couldn't get the timber.

"It was then I thought of the matches."

I asked Mr. Smith what he did for a living.

"I potter about with gladioli and dahlias, help my Dad with trotting horses, ride my bike, and play cricket," he replied. "That fills in my time, but what I do for a living is a secret.

(He rang me later and said I could mention that he owned two trotters called Indian Star and Sure Rey. "But don't go and back them, because I'm not sure if they are going very well right now," he added confidentially.)

"I spend about six hours a week on making match furniture," Mr. Smith said as he showed me the interior of his cocktail cabinet.

"First of all I clean up the matches. They are usually used ones, because the new ones are expensive.

"Then I start building the section of the article I am making. It is like making plywood. I interlock the first layer of matches into the required shape and build the other layers across it.

"My only tools are razor blades and very fine sandpaper.

"For the cocktail cabinet I used 47lbs. of glue. The total cost of the cabinet was £40, which was spent on french polish, glass for shelves, locks, hinges, and electrical fittings.

"It took three years to make.

"I french polished the whole thing when it was finished. All the poker work and designing and painting are my work, too.

"I do the poker work with a small electric soldering iron. I didn't learn to draw, but my father is a draughtsman, so I guess it runs in the family.

"My mother was an artist, too, so I guess that also runs in our family, but I'm not really good. I know when a thing is artistic.

"Did you see those French paintings at the Art Gallery?" he said, laughing heartily. "They were terrible; looked like the result of a bit of brush cleaning by the artists.

"I had a lot of trouble getting the correct design for the English coat of arms on my cocktail cabinet, but I eventually got it from an encyclopaedia.

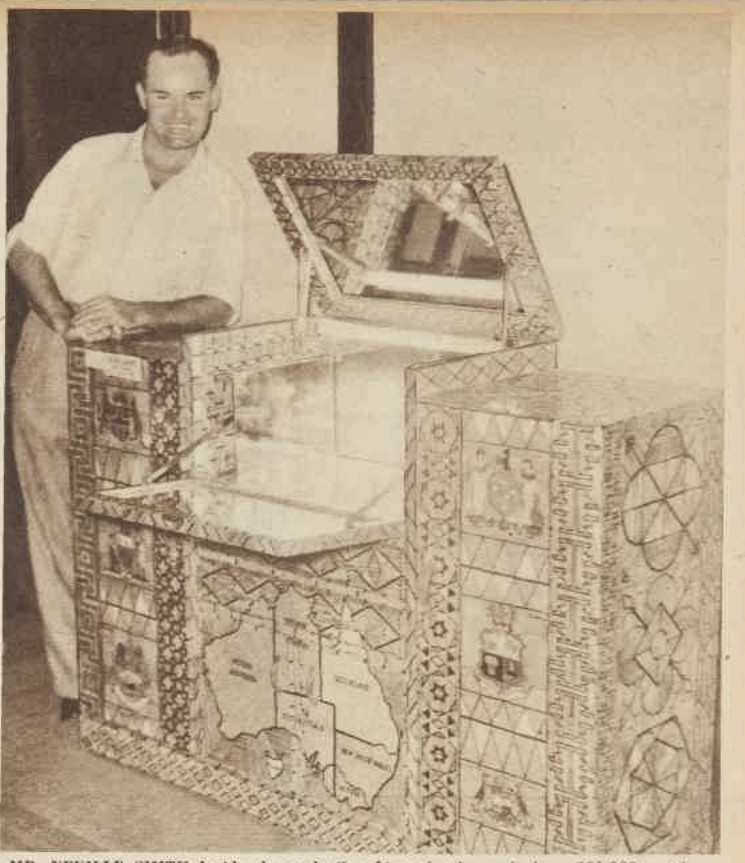
"I hope the Show people put my cabinet on a big stand, because it doesn't look nearly as good on the floor," he added.

"It's heavy, too," he proudly went on. "Takes four men to lift it."

Mr. Smith shut the lid of his cocktail cabinet reluctantly.

I went to the waiting car.

Mr. Smith wheeled out his bike and sprinted back to North Sydney.

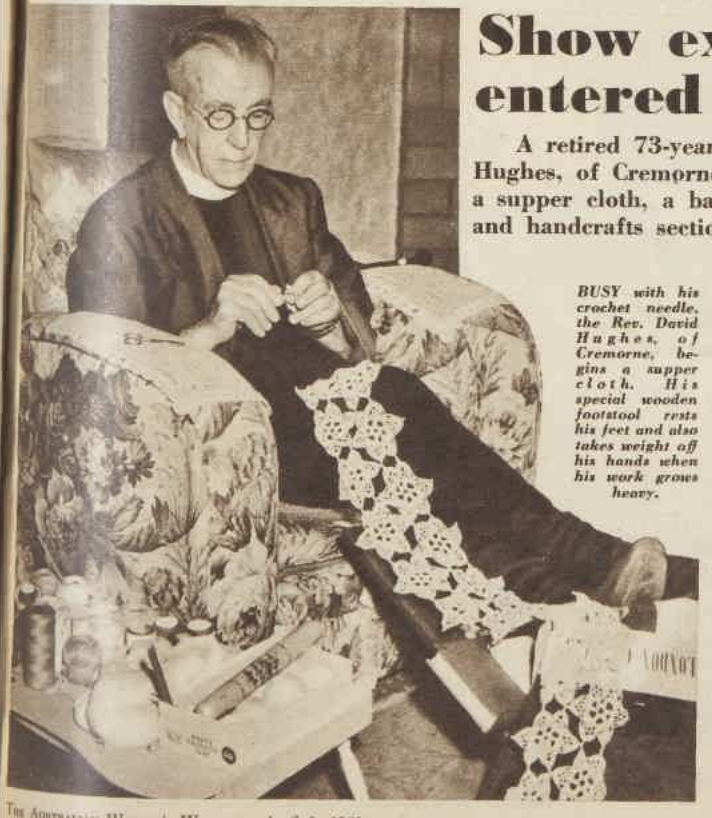


MR. NEVILLE SMITH beside the cocktail cabinet that he made from 381,000 matches. He has entered it in the "any other article" division in the arts and handcrafts section at this year's Royal Easter Show.

Show exhibits of crochet work entered by retired cleric

By a STAFF REPORTER

A retired 73-year-old Methodist minister, the Rev. David Hughes, of Cremorne, N.S.W., has crocheted three bedspreads, a supper cloth, a bathmat, and two string bags for the arts and handcrafts section of the Royal Easter Show.



BUSY with his crochet needle, the Rev. David Hughes, of Cremorne, begins a supper cloth. His special wooden footstool rests his feet and also takes weight off his hands when his work grows heavy.

ALTHOUGH he has had only a few hours' instruction in crochet work, he is an expert and makes exquisite pieces in intricate patterns.

When I visited Mr. Hughes at his home he was busy crocheting a row of medallions for his latest work, a 180-medallion supper cloth.

"Sit down, sit down," he said, moving some of his crochet cotton from the chair nearest him. "Don't mind if I keep at my work. I have so much to do and time does run away."

Mr. Hughes, who retired because of ill-health 12 years ago, used to make felt toys for children, but during the war his supplies of felt ran out.

"One of my lady friends suggested that I learn to knit or crochet," he told me.

"Knitting was out, because I had enough of that at school.

"Oh, yes, when I was a lad in the old country, we school chaps knitted all our own mufflers, jerseys — there were no sweaters in those days — and socks, and I got heartily sick of it.

"This friend, Mrs. T. M. Taylor, wife of a fellow minister, gave me a few hours' instruction one afternoon, and I bought a book of directions.

"Since then I have had no trouble with the work.

"I'm becoming famous for my work," he said with a laugh. "People are always asking me to make them little things. I even send them as far away as Scotland and the United States.

"I can't dig in the garden any more, so it keeps me occupied."

Mr. Hughes said it took him 40 minutes to work a medallion and he could do 10 to 12 in a day.

"See my big bedspread here," he said, and got up to spread out a magnificent coffee-colored bedspread. "This is going in the Royal Easter Show and has 893 medallions, which took 450 hours to make and another 70 hours to sew together.

"And this supper cloth has 180 medallions, which took 360 hours to make, 60 hours to sew together, and another three to do the edging.

"I'm quite well known about here for my specially bright colored shopping bags and gay bathmats, too."

I was admiring his work when he said he also did lots of patchwork.

"There is a patchwork quilt with 2021 hectagons I made in seven months."

He showed me the multi-colored quilt. "When I was working on this I collected scraps of material from everyone I knew. All my wife's friends used to bring me the pretty bits of material left over from their dressmaking."

I asked Mrs. Hughes whether she could crochet, and she said no.

"I weave a little, but only in the winter. One in the family making things is enough."

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STYLISH BIRDS

These fantail and pouter pigeons are typical of the varieties entered in the Sydney Royal Easter Show. They are favorites among pigeon fanciers for their pretty ways and affectionate natures.



PIGEON FANCIER Mr. C. Dunston explains the finer points of a white fantail to two young admirers. Fantails are judged with particular attention to their tails and breasts.

SOME of the 600-odd entries in the pigeon classes at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney this year are from Mr. C. Dunston, Vice-President of the Fantail Pigeon Society of N.S.W.

Mr. Dunston, like thousands of other enthusiastic pigeon fanciers in Australia, regularly enters his birds in shows.

To date he has won nearly 1000 awards, including more than 300 in the Royal Agricultural Society's Shows in Sydney.

For the average person the word "pigeons" merely conjures up a vision of homing pigeons wheeling in the sky.

But pigeon-keeping is an absorbing hobby requiring expert knowledge.

A single show may have as many as 80 separate classes for entries. Some shows are exclusively for these pretty, stylish birds.

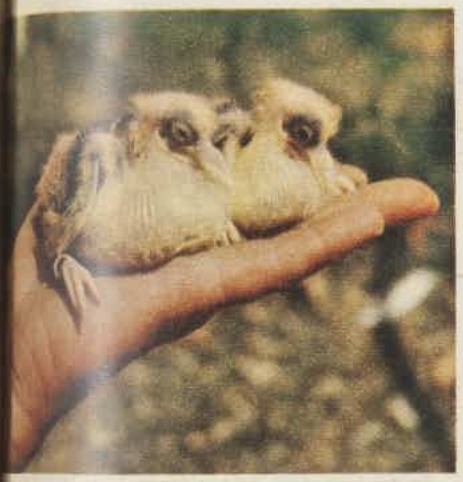
Fancy pigeons include such types as pigmy pouter, fantail, and tumbler. Each type has a variety of colors including black, white, red (really a reddish brown), yellow, silver, and even "mealy."

Mr. Dunston keeps his birds on his brother-in-law's farm at Ebenezer, a village seven miles north of Windsor, N.S.W.

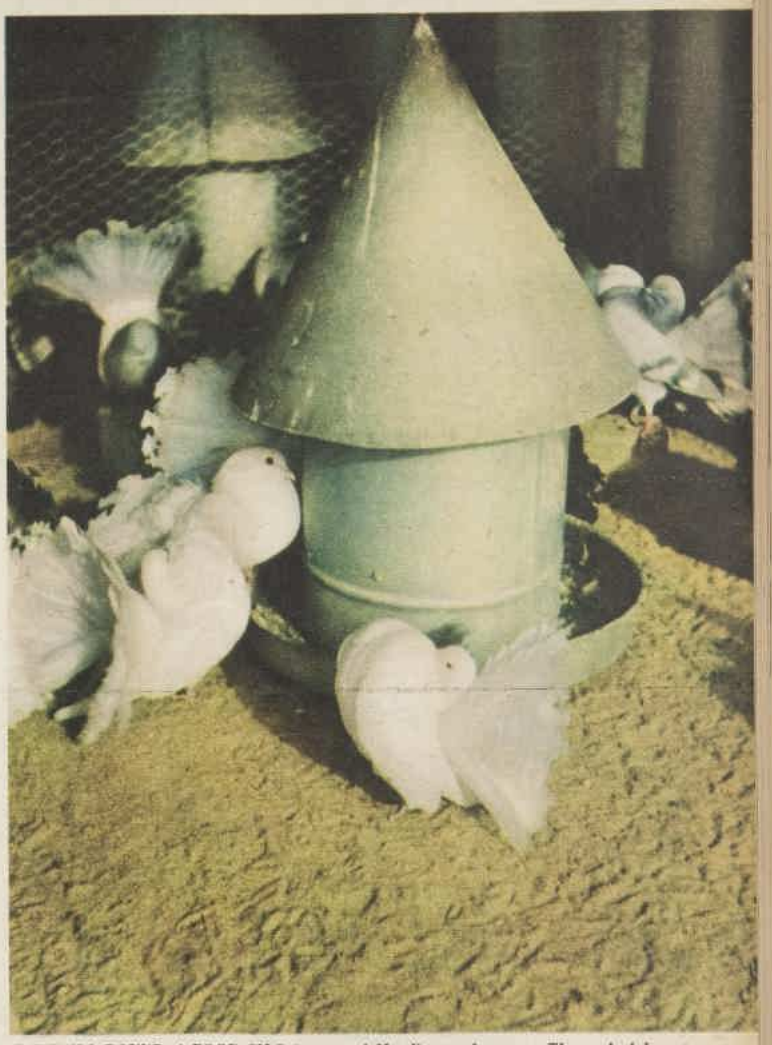
He works in Sydney and lives there during the week. At week-ends he spends a busy two days with his pigeons.

Pigeon-raising is not all pleasure. There is plenty of work attached to it if one is to do the job properly.

Mr. Dunston keeps his birds in clean, spacious pens with adequate shelter. Water is laid on, and a valve is arranged so that the drinking troughs are automatically filled.



TWO FLEDGLINGS are held in the palm of a man's hand. One has a ring with a stamped date round its leg. Birds are ringed to show the season in which they were born.



FANTAILS ROUND A FOOD SILO in one of Mr. Dunston's pens. The arched breast and spreading tail of the pigeon in the foreground are typical. The birds recognise their owner and respond to his caresses. These pictures by Molly and Leo Lyons.



A FANTAIL shows its points. These are: Tail spread and erect; breast round and protuberant; neck tapering. Fantails know that they are pretty. They are born show-offs.



FINE SPECIMEN of a pigmy pouter. These birds can expand themselves enormously round the neck until they look as though they have swallowed a tennis ball whole.



BLACK FANTAIL setting. Nesting time for pigeons is in spring and early summer. The female lays two eggs, but her mate shares the work of egg-sitting and young-rearing.

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6.2.29

MOTHER



"Down . . . and OUT!"

BUTCH



"Now I'm comin' to th' part where th' murderer's identity is revealed—unless you can recall where your dough's hid."

It seems to me

By



Dorothy Drain

"HOW to get dinner for four in 20 minutes," the title of a story in an American newspaper, naturally attracted my attention.

Any woman who works outside the home reads that kind of thing. She is always hoping that there really is some short cut to entertaining.

This 20-minute demonstrator begins by opening a tin of corn, spends seven minutes making a white sauce to go with some grilled ham, and then announces blithely that the dessert and the salad have been made beforehand. Beforehand! There you have the crux of the whole matter.

My own schedule for entertaining runs thus:

A fortnight before: Ask the guests. At this stage one does not really believe that the day will ever come.

Three days before: Start to worry. Draw up a shopping list. This has a soothing effect.

Day before: Hat and gloves on, ready for office, start to look for a recipe. (Some perverse streak always makes me embark on untried recipes for guests.) Revise shopping list.

Night before: Prepare the food. Muddle the whole thing by tidying out bathroom cupboard (which more sensibly could be jammed shut). Set alarm for five a.m.

Six a.m.: Struggle out of bed, finish preparation in highly excitable state. Depart for office.

Evening: After all this, and I should think so, too, dinner ought to take only half an hour to put on table. Unfortunately, some guests embark on long and entrancing piece of gossip, which throws out whole schedule. By the time dinner is served guests are so ravenous that they would eat horse and like it. This causes them to praise food so extravagantly that the foolish cook resolves to repeat the whole nerve-racking business next month.

* * *

SAW two women standing with their noses glued to the window of a hotel's bottle department the other day.

The window was full of fancy bottles of imported liqueurs, and the women were crying ecstatically, "Oh, that's a lovely one." "Look, I like that one even better."

No, they weren't dipsomaniacs. Just a couple of amateur decorators looking for lamp bases.

* * *

HOUSEWIVES will take exception to a statement made by a former president of the N.S.W. Vegetable Growers' Association, Mr. W. Boyd.

Mr. Boyd was reported as saying that the average housewife did not know quality, which was proved when retailers marked two heaps of beans from the same bag at different prices. The dearer heap was always sold first, he said.

He makes no allowance for the fact that human beings, thank heaven, are still inclined to trust the other fellow's honesty. "If its dearer it must be better," thinks the shopper.

Besides, shortages of war years produced a generation of women lacking the courage of their mothers, who were wont to snap beans in two, taste grapes, and feel peaches with complete fearlessness.

A RARE tribute from the professional to the layman comes from the Chief of Police of Meriden, Connecticut, U.S.A.

He says that policemen can pick up a lot of helpful information from reading detective stories.

Specialists are notoriously difficult to please in works of fiction, and the detective writers must feel that they have really arrived if they can please a police chief, even a police chief of a city with a population of only 40,000.

Some writers of detective stories go to no end of trouble to stress the routine police work, and it is nice to think somebody appreciates it.

Personally, I always skip those bits, being much more interested in the distinguished amateur detective's peculiar hunches.

However, if the Meriden chief's belief is put into practice, it will make a policeman's lot a happy one. Less of that arduous cadet training and more time spent curled up with a good book.

* * *

LAST week I filled an extraordinary gap in my theatrical education — I saw "Charley's Aunt" for the first time.

By a great piece of good fortune my companion had also managed to go through life without seeing any of innumerable stage performances or the four films of this hoary farce.

The result was that we both laughed so hilariously at Sydney's Mercury Theatre production of it that we must have warmed the producer's heart.

Finding it a great deal funnier than many a newer farce, I was inclined to sweep away some minor criticisms made by another member of the audience.

"Well, yes," he said gently. "But after 60 years, you know, it lacks to many of us the impact of a first night."

* * *

PICTORIAL clocks will be on show at the British Industries Fair this month. "People look at a clock so often that is worth while making it attractive," said the makers. "Sailing scenes and flower studies will enliven the blank face of the ordinary clock."

Blandly the clock ticks on—
And who would presume to say
That the face of a clock should show
A mien that is grave or gay?

Time passes, swift or slow,
Minutes, and days, and years,
And only its victims know
If its passage means joy or tears.

At youth and at age it mocks,
In turn playing tortoise and hare.
No wonder the faces of clocks
Show a blank, expressionless stare.

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tableware



The 'Swan Brand' range of tea-sets is now ready to grace your tea table. Its shining 'Swan-Cromalin' untarnishable finish and Polished Aluminium Individual pieces may be purchased

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QUICKSET WITH CURLYPET

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Saras prepare for trip to England



IN BELLINGEN Mrs. Sara uses a globe to show the Quads where they will be going. Judith (left), Alison, and Phillip are intent, but Mark is more interested in the camera.



IN LONDON photographer Alec Murray took this picture of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Holmes having a cup of tea in the lounge of their Chiswick home where the Saras will stay.

Quads will meet their grandparents and the Lord Mayor of London

With only ten weeks to go before Mr. and Mrs. Percy Sara, their son Geoffrey, and the Sara Quads leave for England to visit Mrs. Sara's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Holmes, many preparations are going on in both Bellingen, N.S.W., and Chiswick, London.

THE Sara family will leave Sydney in the P. & O. liner Strathmore on June 12, and will be greeted by their relatives in London on July 19.

From London, Anne Matheson writes that there is much excitement in Chiswick as Betty Sara's relatives and friends make plans to give the seven members of the Sara family a truly happy and memorable holiday.

Everyone wants to meet the famous Quads, from the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Rupert de la Bere, who has invited them to the Mansion House, to the newest recruit at the fire station where Jack Burns, Betty Sara's half-brother, is a fireman.

Mr. and Mrs. Holmes live in a cosy two-storied house.

"My husband and I will move downstairs to the front room," Mrs. Holmes said. "That will give Betty and Pip and the children the top half of the house to themselves."

(Percy Sara has always been called "Pip" in the family. Betty says that she only started calling him Percy because everyone else in Bellingen does. She doesn't think the Holmes family would know him by any other name.)

With Percy and Betty in Mr. and Mrs. Holmes' bedroom, the Quads in Betty's old room, and the boxroom turned out and refurnished for Geoffrey, the grandparents feel that there will be plenty of room for everyone.

"We aren't making a fuss," Mrs. Holmes explained. "This is Betty's home, and she knows every corner of the house."

Mr. Holmes is going to make two wooden gates for the top and bottom of the stairs.

"They will keep the youngsters from roaming round the house and falling downstairs," he said.

Neighbors, friends, and relatives came round within five minutes of hearing that the Quads were coming to England, offering beds, linen, extra cups, and so on for the children.

Mrs. Gladys Deards, Betty's sister, is in charge of extra linen. Her daughter, Judy, and son, John, are roped in to help.

Mrs. Deards' other daughter, 22-year-old Sheila, niece and a great friend of Betty, has postponed her wedding to engineer Charles Armstrong until September so that the Sara family can be present.

"I'll have plenty of willing hands to help with the Quads," Mrs. Holmes said. "We would like their holiday to be a family one. I know that is the way Betty wants it, too."

While the Quads are in England they will celebrate their third birthday. Mrs. Holmes is having a birthday party for them at the house, and granddaughter 17-year-old Jillian Burns has planned the birthday cake.

The English Quads (in all there are three sets of young ones and a teenage set) plan to have a great get-together with the Sara Quads.

"Couldn't we hire a bus and have a day at the seaside?" Mrs. Good, mother of the Bristol Quads, has written.

But Mrs. Holmes is not making any arrangements until Betty arrives.

Meanwhile, Betty Sara, in Bellingen, is being kept up to date by letter with her parents' preparations as she copes with her own.

After sorting out the children's clothes, Betty told staff reporter Margaret Bingham that she had really very little extra to get for them.

"They are very well supplied with good clothes," she said. "For instance, Mark and Phillip have three new suits they have never worn."

For colder weather Betty has ordered little overcoats with velvet Peter Pan collars for the Quads and also warm dressing-gowns.

She is only just beginning to organise her own wardrobe for the trip.

The Quads, of course, have no idea of the changes ahead of them in the next few months.

Except for Phillip, who made a visit to Sydney recently with his parents, none of the children has been out into the world before.

Phillip was taken to a specialist in Sydney about his flat feet and has been given simple corrective exercises to do. He will wear built-up shoes.

The Quads' doctor in Bellingen is giving them injections against typhoid, paratyphoid, and cholera, as well as smallpox vaccinations.

"These are not compulsory," he explained. "But it's better not to take chances, especially as the ship will be calling at Eastern ports."

The doctor has no fears for the Quads' health during the trip.

"They are very healthy children," he said, "and they are not sensitive to colds."



THE QUADS get acquainted with their doctor's equipment before their injections. Judith and Alison discuss matters with the doctor while Phillip and Mark, with father's help, experiment with the stethoscope.



ACCOMPANIED by six-year-old Geoffrey, who is greatly excited about the visit to England, Mrs. Sara does some shopping for the trip at a Bellingen store. Ray Eddy is on the other side of the counter. Bellingen pictures by staff photographer Ron Berg.

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GUARANTEED FOR LENGTH, FIT, STRETCH AND TEXTURE. **14/11**

Caramba! Those bewitching

"Fiesta" nylons

now have

"COLOR-GENIC" HEELS

Filmy 15-denier Fiestas — always lovely — look *twice* as lovely with their elegant new "Color-genic" heels! "Color-genic" heels are slender heel panels made of nylon yarn that has been specially treated to give a flattering TONE-ON-TONE effect! They're a dramatic foil to Fiesta's Latin-American shades, Vista, Sierra, Mantilla, Patio! Plain heels, too, if you prefer them!

"Color-genic" heels are a wonderful improvement in basic hosiery styling! They're an intensified version *of the color of the stocking-leg!*

Glamorous **Gossamer nylons** have

the New York SHADOW HEEL

They're "all-occasion" stockings — *sheer* — but *strong* and durable — with firm-fitting tops, full sandal feet and neat shell-toes. They *fit* without a wrinkle and feature New York Shadow heels — slim panels framed with a shadowy outline that does wonderful things for your ankles! *Glamorous plain heels, if you prefer them.*

GUARANTEED FOR LENGTH, FIT, STRETCH AND TEXTURE. **12/11**



Mother's Day is only a few weeks off — give her sheer Color-genic Heel Fiestas or beautiful Shadow Heel Gossamers.

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1 **ADOPTING** Patsy (Donna Corcoran), Protestant Victoria McChesney agrees to raise her as a Catholic.



2 **POLITICIAN** Patrick McChesney (Walter Pidgeon) fears adoption will be labelled as a move to gain Catholic vote.



3 **FURIOUS** at a newspaper attack on Patrick's motives for the adoption while he is out of town, Victoria berates the editor (Philip Ober), who is Patrick's political opponent.

Scandal at Scourie

For her comeback film after eighteen months away from the screen, Greer Garson plays a spirited small-town housewife in M.G.M.'s "Scandal at Scourie."

Teamed with Miss Garson is Walter Pidgeon as her adoring politician-husband, Patrick McChesney, who knows what he wants when his wife tells him.

The story tells of political chaos in a small Canadian town innocently caused by orphan Donna Corcoran.



4 **SCUFFLE** terminates political meeting when Patrick's motives are queried. The town ostracises the McChesneys. Patrick is ready to relinquish Patsy, who is gradually ruining him.



5 **MEETING** of the townsfolk blames Patsy for a fire at the school. This infuriates Patrick, who announces that he will keep Patsy in the face of all opposition. Meanwhile Patsy feels that she is unwanted by the McChesneys, and disappears.



6 **DISCOVERED** after a frantic search, Patsy is proved innocent of the fire. Townspeople realise Patrick's motives are not political, and Patsy returns home with the McChesneys.

CITY FILM GUIDE

Films reviewed

CAPITOL.—★ "It Ain't Hay," comedy, starring Abbott and Costello. Plus ★ "Typhoon," drama, starring Charles Bickford, Preston Foster. (Both re-releases.)

CENTURY.—★★ "My Cousin Rachel," drama, starring Olivia de Havilland, Richard Burton. Plus featurettes.

EMBASSY.—★★ "Derby Day," drama, starring Anna Neagle, Michael Wilding, Googie Withers, John McCallum. Plus ★ "The Ringer," mystery, starring Herbert Lom, Mai Zetterling.

ESQUIRE.—★★ "The Thief," thriller, starring Ray Milland, Rita Gam. Plus "Actor's Blood and Woman of Sin," drama, starring Edward G. Robinson, Marsha Hunt.

LIBERTY.—★★★ "Quo Vadis?" technicolor drama of early Rome, starring Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr, Leo Genn, Peter Ustinov.

LYCEUM.—★ "Ma and Pa Kettle Go To Paris," comedy, starring Marjorie Main, Percy Kilbride. Plus ★ "Horizons West," technicolor Western drama, starring Rock Hudson, Julia Adams.

LYRIC.—★ "Scarlet Street," drama, starring Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett. Plus ★ "The Climax," technicolor musical drama, starring Boris Karloff, Susannah Foster, Turhan Bey. (Both re-releases.)

PALACE.—★★ "Sudden Fear," thriller, starring Joan Crawford, Jack Palance. Plus "Bal Tabarin," drama, starring Muriel Lawrence, Steve Brodie. (Both re-releases.)

PLAZA.—★ "Bugles in the Afternoon," technicolor Western, starring Ray Milland, Helena Carter, Hugh Marlowe. Plus "The Ring," boxing drama, starring Lalo Rios, Rita Moreno.

PRINCE EDWARD.—★★★ "The Greatest Show On Earth," technicolor circus drama, starring Betty Hutton, Cornel Wilde, Charlton Heston, Gloria Grahame. Plus featurettes.

REGENT.—★★★. "The African Queen," technicolor drama, starring Katharine Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart. Plus featurettes.

STATE.—★★★ "Mandy," drama, starring Jack Hawkins, Phyllis Calvert, Terence Morgan. Plus ★ "Gentlemen, the Queen," documentary.

VARIETY.—★★★ "Come Back, Little Sheba," drama, starring Burt Lancaster, Shirley Booth, Terry Moore. Plus ★ "Two-Dollar Bettor," gambling drama, starring John Litel, Marie Winsor.

VICTORY.—★★ "My Six Convicts," prison drama, starring Millard Mitchell, John Beal, Gilbert Roland, Marshall Thompson. Plus "Last Train From Bombay," drama, starring Jon Hall, Christine Larsen.

Films not yet reviewed

CIVIC.—"Untamed Women," adventure, starring Mikel Conrad, Doris Merrick, Richard Monahan. Plus "Joe Palooka in the Knock-Out," boxing drama, starring Joe Kirkwood, Leon Errol. (Re-release.)

MAYFAIR.—"Lullaby of Broadway," technicolor musical, starring Doris Day, Gene Nelson. Plus "Park Row," newspaper drama, starring Gene Evans, Mary Welch.

PARK.—"About Face," technicolor musical, starring Gordon MacRae, Eddie Bracken, Virginia Gibson. Plus "Barricade," technicolor drama, starring Ruth Roman, Dane Clark.

SAVOY.—"Beauty and the Beast," French-language fantasy, starring Josette Day, Jean Marais, Michel Auclair.

ST. JAMES.—"Battle Circus," drama, starring Humphrey Bogart, June Allyson. Plus "Confidentially Connie," comedy, starring Van Johnson, Janet Leigh.

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Coronation Year decrees an Elizabethan Red

Michel

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Stars of new action films

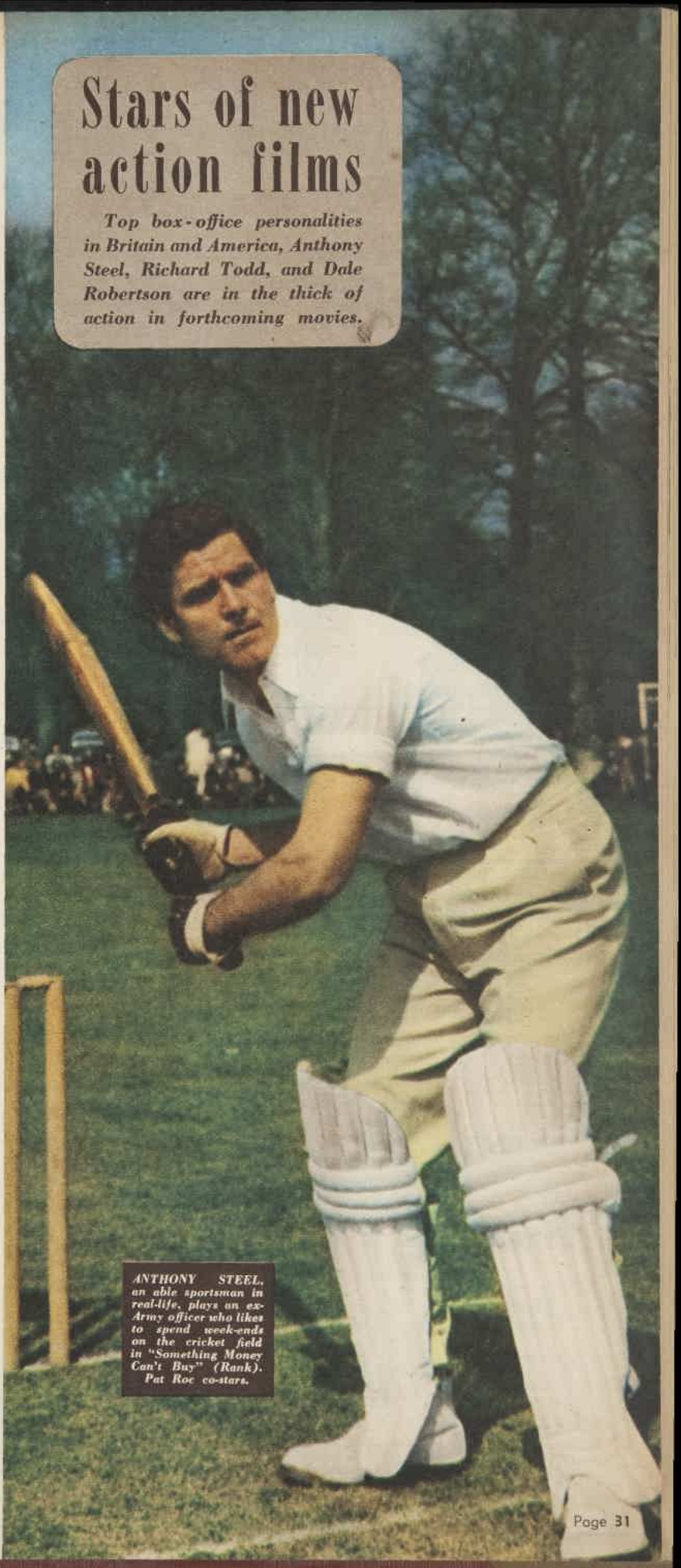
Top box-office personalities in Britain and America, Anthony Steel, Richard Todd, and Dale Robertson are in the thick of action in forthcoming movies.



DALE ROBERTSON (above), handsome ex-college athlete and one-time cowpuncher, plays the role of a cowboy in the Fox Western "The Silver Whip." Lola Albright is the girl.

RICHARD TODD (below), well-set-up British actor, figures as an adventurer in Walt Disney's technicolor spectacle of early England, "The Sword and the Rose." Glynis Johns plays Mary Tudor.





ANTHONY STEEL, an able sportsman in real-life, plays an ex-Army officer who likes to spend week-ends on the cricket field in "Something Money Can't Buy" (Rank). Pat Roc co-stars.

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Bacteria can't exist near Safe-T-Sheet

Baby Pram and Cot Safe-T-Sheet, 22/6.

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Rubagon Safe-T-Sheet is also in Hospital Bed Sheet and adult Pillow Sleeve size.

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All-BRAN is not a purgative. It's a wholesome, naturally regulating cereal made from the vital outer layers of wheat. Provides gentle-action bulk necessary to end constipation. Rich in Vitamin B1, B2, Calcium, Phosphorus, Niacin and Iron, Kellogg's All-Bran gives you vitality as it brings regularity—instead of purging the energy out of you. Ask your grocer for Kellogg's All-Bran right away. End constipation the way nature intended.

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BRASSO



HOLLYWOOD tough guy Humphrey Bogart arriving at London Airport en route to Rome to make his new film, "Beat the Devil," with Jennifer Jones and Gina Lollobrigida.

Bogart glad to be abroad

Humphrey Bogart, with one foot on the London-Rome plane, told me he was glad to be abroad because of the rigorous economy drive in Hollywood.

By BILL STRUTTON, of our London staff

BOGART was off to Rome for first location shots of "Beat the Devil," in which he stars with Jennifer Jones and ravishing Gina Lollobrigida—the film sensation of Europe.

He had been sloping around London, getting organised on plans for "Beat the Devil," and enjoying life with increased gusto ever since the day his accountant advised him his fortune had passed the million mark.

Ever since then people have been bombarding Bogart with requests for money. He said: "I'm apt to cringe every time a stranger approaches me nowadays, in case he wants me to back his plan for a dogs' home.

"I find myself starting conversations like this: 'What do you want—a Rolls Royce or a Cadillac?'"

Reverting to his immediate plans, he said, "We spend a couple of months shooting around Ravello, Amalfi, and across in Tripoli, before coming back to finish off the film in the studios here.

"It's a case of back-to-the-thick-ear-thriller for Bogie-boy.

"But it isn't hard to take with two gals in the cast like those two. Ever seen Lollobrigida?"

His eyes sought the heavens and he whistled. "Boy! No wonder all Europe's going crazy about her!"

But Bogart is at his eloquent best when he's singing the praises of his wife, Lauren Bacall. You'd think he was her press-agent.

"She's a big beautiful baby who's gonna make her name in show business," he said. "And I'm not telling you that just because she's Mrs. Bogart.

"She's got a lot of experience to get, and she's busy getting it. The reason why she couldn't come with me is that she's making a film in some pretty competitive company—Betty Grable and Marilyn Monroe. I'm not familiar with the script, but I'll bet Mrs. Bogart gets the guy."

He gave his wry grin. "The film's called 'How To Marry a Millionaire'!

"After this I hope she'll be able to join me in Italy," he added.

Bogart is an incurable wisecracker, and has a heart of gold. He hides this behind a belligerent stare.

"Everyone expects me to act as tough in real life as I am on the screen," he said in his matter-of-fact way. "So I don't like to let 'em down.

"I remember meeting a Free-French daredevil in Oran, who thought I ought to live up to my screen self.

"His idea of being really tough was to chew glass. He kept egging me on until I decided to settle the matter—one way or another. I took a hearty bite on a wineglass."

Bogie winced at the memory. "I was on a liquid diet for weeks," he said.

I murmured something about the Oscar he won last year for "The African Queen."

He pulled at the brim of his hat, drew deeply at his cigarette, looked darkly about him, and said:

"When John Huston decided to make 'The African Queen,' he said to me, 'Humph, I've got a story. The hero is a low life. You are the biggest low life in town, so what are we waiting for?'

"I like remarks like that. It shows I'm talking to a real friend.

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YOUNG MOTHER. The Duchess of York with her first baby, who became Edward VIII, though his family always called him David. In this picture there is a marked resemblance to the present Queen.



QUEEN VICTORIA with the Duke and Duchess of York at Osborne. When the marriage was arranged the Queen expressed her pleasure in an entry in her famous diary. Beautiful Princess May was a favorite of Her Majesty.



THE LATE KING GEORGE V and his "dear wife" driving in an open carriage through London while celebrating the Silver Jubilee of their reign, when their subjects demonstrated their loyalty.



QUEEN MARY with the Queen, then Princess Elizabeth, on the balcony at Buckingham Palace. There was a very close bond between the aged Queen and the granddaughter she helped to train for the throne and whose early accession she lived to see.



WORLD WAR I. This family group shows Prince Albert, later George VI, the Duke of Kent, and the Duke of Gloucester, the King and Queen, and the Princess Royal, who was a V.A. The Prince of Wales was serving with the Army in France. Prince Albert served in the Navy and the R.F.C.



FUEL DRIVE. Queen Mary took a turn with a saw when troops were cutting timber near Badminton, Gloucestershire, during World War II.



QUEEN MARY with King Edward VIII on Armistice Day, 1936, after a memorial service at the Cenotaph. They are seen leaving the Home Office.



GREAT-GRANDSON. "He's a Windsor," said Queen Mary, when she saw Prince Charles, heir to the throne. This picture was taken at the christening.

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Death of Britain's loved Queen Mary

Devotion to family and the nation inspired all

By AINSLIE BAKER

Queen Mary's death has taken from the world one of the last great Victorians. Born at Kensington Palace at midnight on May 26, 1867, in the bedroom in which Queen Victoria was born, she lived to influence four reigns profoundly.

They were those of her husband, George V, her eldest son, Edward VIII, who has said he always had his mother's sympathy in the crisis that brought about his abdication, that of her second son, George VI, and finally her granddaughter Queen Elizabeth.

QUEEN MARY supervised Elizabeth's education and training from her earliest years, instilling into the little Princess her own sense of duty, awareness of obligation, and pride in the House of Windsor.

So well did Queen Mary do her work that she left the imprint of all that was finest and imperishable in her character on the young Elizabeth II.

When in later years men and women come to seek an explanation for the unassailable position of love and admiration Queen Mary occupied in the hearts of the British people, they will find many unrelated and contradictory factors.

They will find a toque, a superlative bearing, ropes of pearls, a Victorian consciousness of family ties, a fetish for punctuality, a passion for antiques, the theatre, and tennis.

But these were no more than by the way. What Queen Mary possessed in the highest degree, and what made her the beloved figure she was, was character.

Character as it is seldom known to-day. Such character that she was able to subordinate personal grief, bitter disappointment, illness, and infirmity to what she considered her role in family and nation.

As well, in the dead Queen Mother there was so much to win the heart. There was her insistence on treating her grown children as though they were still in the nursery. "Gloucester, stop fidgeting," she reprimanded loudly at the wedding of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.

There was her old, high-set Daimler, that gave so many servicemen a lift along country roads during the war. Her impatience with humbug. Her undisguised love of a bargain. The frequently noticed use of her inevitable parasol to bring back the wandering attention of a companion.

Behind her facade of reality Queen Mary was everybody's grandmother, insistent on her honored place in family councils, unhesitant in making known her displeasure; indulgent, incapable of being hoodwinked, an invincible garnerer of the best-kept family secrets.

These were the foundations on which rested an Empire's deep love and homage.

People loved her no less because it was well known that she was at times laughably close with her pennies when it came to her personal wardrobe, having too well-known frocks altered, a family-joke ermine cape dyed, and practising countless housewifely domestic economies.

And all the while her great courageous heart was contradicting the outward show of martinet, disciplinarian, and stern matriarch.

To those genuinely in need of solace, motherly advice, and encouragement, the Queen Mother's rich store of experience and human understanding was unfailingly offered.

After the death of King George VI, the shocked and grief-stricken Princess Margaret spent a lot of time with Queen Mary, and drew solace from her wisdom and human understanding.

Seven bereavements

Queen Mary during her long life suffered seven great personal bereavements, and rose above them with inspiring fortitude.

First, as a newly engaged girl, there was the death of her fiance, the heir to the Throne of England and the future George V's elder brother.

In 1919 Prince John, the youngest of her five sons, died in his teens. The year 1942 saw the death in a flying accident while on active service of her fourth son, the handsome and charming Duke of Kent.

The darkest year of Queen Mary's life came in 1936, with the death in January of her husband, King George V, and the abdication in December of the same year of her dearly loved eldest son, Edward VIII.

Those closest to her at the time predicted that the blow of her eldest son's dereliction from what she publicly named his duty must leave her a broken woman.

But Queen Mary was made of sterner stuff. After a short period of semi-withdrawal from public affairs, she emerged erect and stately as ever, and took up the multitudinous useful duties she was to make hers as Queen Mother.

It was this continued rain of shocks and blows that changed the serenely beautiful face of the former Princess May into the strong, character-stamped face known to this generation.

Time brought Queen Mary two great consolations. They were the superb devotion to duty of her second son, George VI, and her own part in the training of Princess Elizabeth for the Throne.

The queenly and dignified fortitude with which Elizabeth bore herself during the accession ceremonies which followed her father's death must have been a source of great pride to her grandmother.

Despite Queen Mary's insistence on the strictest Court etiquette and her refusal to change from the fashions of her young womanhood, Queen Mary frequently startled palace officials by showing that she was well informed about the newest and most extreme trends of modern thought and behaviour.

She who so well might have mourned the past retained until the end the fresh and inquiring mind that made her champion the new.

Britons have long known and cherished the fact that the stately and awesome Queen Mother, rigid upholder of etiquette and protocol, attended much-discussed plays and read books that were censured in some quarters.

Although Queen Mary was persuaded to move from London to the safety of Gloucestershire during World War II, she merely transferred her war work there.

Serious public concern for the health of the courageous old Queen was first felt in the spring of 1952, when she had a persistent chill.

It was not very much later that it became known that Queen Mary would not be attending the Coronation.

In the following months Queen Mary's activities began to lessen. She drove out less often in her monumental car, bulletins announcing that she was indisposed began more often to appear.

In May the little Prince Charles and Princess Anne drove in state, their arms laden with flowers, to pay their respects to their great-grandmother on her birthday.

At Christmas, it was evident that the aged Queen's health was failing.

But the real beginning of her increasing indisposition and illness was surely that dark February 6 of 1952 when the news was broken to her that the King, her dear "Bertie," had died.



84th BIRTHDAY picture of Queen Mary taken at Hyde Park, London, when she watched her granddaughter, Princess Elizabeth, now Queen, present the King's Color to the Royal Air Forces in Britain.

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Rene presents . . .



● Made in beige jersey, Pierre Balmain's elegant dress, above left, has a long scarf draped from the neck, across the bodice, and down the skirt. The tight-fitting bottle-green belt matches the triangularly placed buttons and the attractive hat and gloves.

● Jeanne Lafaurie designs the barrel-shaped suit, above right, in gunmetal-grey velvet. The skirt is slim and the rounded jacket buttons right down the front. The suit is worn with a matching jersey jacket-length scarf which is tied loosely at the throat.

● The cleverly tailored dress, right, is by Gres. The bodice features the long torso line, with the waist defined, but not nipped. Fitted sections over the hips give a smooth line to the skirt, which flares from the low-set pleats on either side.

● Jacques Griffe's perfect black wool suit, far right, is not too fitted. The coat has an easy line at the waist. The whole design is extremely simple and plain with just the small collar and jacket edge outlined with a row of shirred black taffeta.

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RACE FASHIONS

● The finest soft sheer violet wool is used by Jeanne Lanvin for the dramatic afternoon and cocktail dress, below. The neckline is quite low with an unusual buttoned front. The skirt flares softly. The panther hat and scarf give a really spectacular finish.

● Soft red velvet makes the low-necked sleeveless dress and matching jacket by Nina Ricci, below right. The loose boxy jacket has epaulet-like pieces falling over the shoulders. Red glass buttons are used to decorate the epaulets and the front closing of the dress.



● Many soft suits will be made in wool jersey this winter. This one by Mad Carpentier, above left, is brilliantly colored. The jumper-like jacket buttons right to the fairly snug hipline. The deeply pleated skirt is slender.

● Lovely coat for afternoon wear by Gres, above right, is smoothly styled on princess lines. The snow-white jersey lining is revealed at the sleeve cuffs and at the low neckline, where it flows out into a becoming shawl collar.

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gurgles Margaret Davis, of Wilson Street, Strathfield



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DRESS SENSE

by Betty Keep

News about autumn and winter night life—colors, trends, materials.

PINK, pale pink, is the greatest single evening color in Paris. Dior's short-skirted wild-rose pink satin model is one of the prettiest dresses ever to come out of Paris. There are, of course, plenty of other night colors, and nothing non-committal about them either.

Red is one—strawberry-red and rose-red—sometimes used as single streaks of color, at other times a dramatic accent.

Winter-violet is another newborn color, pink-purple, mauve-purple, and a violent violet-purple.

White is important, ice-white, oyster-white, and a creamy vanilla-white; white glistening with white glitter, and white draped with a crimson stole or worn with a tiny bolero of dark fur.

Black is a signature of autumn, black worn alone, alluring black, not just good black, and black with a vivid contrast color.

The young are wearing chiffon, the sophisticated young—satin. For more adult years, velvet, lace, brocade, and supple silk taffetas are in the news.

Numbers of materials are made important by wonderful embroidery.



ALL the great dress designers are campaigning for the short theatre dress—it is labelled "theatre," but is a dress to wear dancing or to informal parties.

The theatre dress is street - length, often wide-skirted, but it can fall narrowly (in chiffon) or be a sheath (in satin or velvet). Silhouette excitement can be added with an ultra-large sash.

For a ball or a big important party the full-length dress is still "it." The skirt can clear the ground by one or two inches, can sweep to the floor—or it might have a brief train (pre-Coronation influence).

There is an air of splendor about many of the designs created by superb material and beautiful embroidery. The newest silhouette is basically slender, but at times it is given a secondary outline by a giant sash or floating panels.

There is still skirt width, but the width is more controlled and more moulded than last season's silhouette. The exception is the 1953 debutante dress, extravagantly wide-skirted.

The budget-wise will concentrate on evening separates. Two choices for the skirt: Narrow — shapely and crackling with allure—or wide. Designs for "tops" are almost unlimited. Note the illustration of skirt and two separate "tops" on this page.

EVENING SKIRT and two separate tops, plus a cummerbund belt, in sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Skirt requires 2¾yds. 108in. tulle or net and 5½yds. 36in. material for underskirt. Lace top requires 1¼yds. of 36in. lace, 1¾yds. 36in. lining. Plain top requires 1¾yds. 36in. material, plus ¼yd. 36in. material for cummerbund. Price, 5/6.

As I read the stars

By EVE HILLIARD

ARIES (March 21-April 20): With Venus, planet of happiness and popularity, in your sun sign, and Mars, your ruler, affecting your finance department, you can't go wrong on March 31 and April 6.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20): You might grow a little reckless in a business matter on April 1. Perhaps the price is higher than you expected. April 5 promises to give you happy hours.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): April 2 might bring a pleasant surprise, just what you want. Expeditions on April 5 may develop drawbacks or produce minor mishaps.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): April 1 brings a problem in personal or business relationships, which must be handled with care. Cheer up. A sensible solution is likely to appear on April 4.

LEO (July 23-August 22): Bounced right into the middle of a new world on April 4? Step out with confidence, you'll make the grade, with April 6 putting fresh heart into you.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): A visit from Lady Luck might make April 2 memorable. On April 5 don't gamble with love, money, or traffic.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): A disagreement with one you love on April 1? Don't magnify a passing cloud. April 5 is fine for romance.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): March 31 may cause alterations in working conditions. On April 2 guard health. April 3 to April 5 may bring deep satisfaction.

SAGGITARIUS (November 23-December 20): If obliged to change your plans on April 2, or if expenditure outruns your intentions, April 6 will show that all's well.

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19): Any dealings in property, anything involving older people, family affairs in general, should flourish on March 31. April 5 offers contentment.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 19): Those planning a journey get a thrill on April 1. April 3 and April 4 may carry you into new scenes or among new acquaintances.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Having to be practical need not be grim on March 31. An earnest study of ways and means could make April 5 the climax of a most enjoyable period.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatsoever for the statements contained in it.]

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Continuing

It's Never Too Late

from page 5

her side, if anything, and she winked at Teddy as she passed.

"I'll see you later, chump," she said.

With that she went on and sat down before the piano. She fulfilled to the letter Teddy's instructions, as she sang songs having to do with various aspects and frustrations of love.

Her voice was deep and quiet, except every now and then, when she forgot the song as it was written and tossed in a few bright ideas of her own involving boops and heigh-de-ho's.

Miss Bennett liked it.

When the songs were finished, she came over to the table and Freddy stood up.

"Clarissa," he said, "I want you to meet my Aunt Mabel."

Miss Bennett glanced up at him with her eyebrows raised in good and righteous indignation, but Teddy tipped her a big wink.

She found she put her hand out and heard herself say, "How do you do? Teddy has told me about you."

She was probably telling a walloping lie by implication, but felt that no great harm could result therefrom.

The young lady took her hand firmly and squeezed it firmly.

"I am glad to meet you," she said, and sat down. She studied Miss Bennett in a serious way for a moment, and then she continued, "I am particularly glad to meet a member of Teddy's family, because I think there are a few things you should know. For instance——"

"Now, now," Teddy stuck in, but not enough to stop Clarissa.

"For instance, this afternoon he promised to give me tea and tiffin at the Ambassador and he failed to——"

"I was at the Ritz," Teddy protested strongly. "Aunt Mabel is my witness, and her record for veracity over the years is exactly one hundred per cent. When I was a little boy, mother used to say, 'I hope you grow up and be truthful like your Aunt Mabel.'"

Clarissa eyed him coldly. "All right, you were at the Ritz, but I was at the Ambassador. I told you the Ambassador. I told you several times."

"I thought it was the Ritz that you told me."

"I told you it was the——"

Miss Bennett said, "Tut, now, tut. Let's have no more of that. You had a misunderstanding." She smiled at Teddy. "He has been forgetful all his life. Even when he was a mere toddler and we called him goody-boy."

Teddy blushed to the very tiptop of his scalp. He gave Miss Bennett a look of horror. He started to speak and stopped.

Miss Bennett felt a little proud of the way she had taken some slight polish off the young man's brass. She remembered that when she had been a governess to a little boy he would almost have hysterics when called goody-boy.

Clarissa laughed heartily. "Ha!" she gasped. "Goody-boy! There's been a change. He is an idle boy. He idles around getting nowhere and doing nothing. Just another newspaperman stifled by the glamor of it all. Why, do you know, he has a novel half done that is a honey, a wow, and he won't finish it because he is a lazy, no-good——"

"Please, Clarissa," Teddy protested. "I'll finish that any day now. But I've got to eat. I've got to work."

Clarissa flipped her hand at him. "Work! He sleeps ten hours, he works eight hours, and he lolls for six hours. Lolling is putting it mildly. A few years more and he'll be just another reporter with a flock of anecdotes."

Miss Bennett frowned at Teddy. "You gave me a different impression," she said.

Teddy sighed. He was outnumbered.

At that moment Clarissa had to arise and get back to her piano for the purpose of entertaining the guests and earning her salary. At that moment Teddy was glad to see her go. He ordered Miss Bennett another glass of sherry.

"Now you mustn't go aiding that woman up there," he told her. "I brought you here to be on my side and help me along, and not to sit around confirming everything she says."

Miss Bennett smiled a small smile. "It sounds to me as if the young lady might be right. And, what is more, if you are going to promote me to being your aunt, I have the right to assume the privileges and prerogatives that go with the position."

It occurred to Teddy that changing the conversation might be a fine idea.

"Tell me," he said, "about the friend of yours who used to find this place a great annoyance."

Miss Bennett sipped her sherry. "Oh —— there is nothing much——nothing at all really. He lives across the street. He used to find the noise late at night a bother—— taxis and rowdy parties and things like that."

"A beau?" asked Teddy.

Miss Bennett shook her head. "Not a beau. Just somebody who might have gone into my Commonplace Book——but I never put him in," she trailed off a little feebly.

"Your Commonplace Book?"

So she told him about the Commonplace Book. She left out the implications she had read in the book, but she told him enough to interest him in what had been so commonplace as not to get in the book at all.

By questions and young interest, he got the story of the friend across the street. What she did not tell him he guessed, because he was a good guesser.

At one time the nephew of the respectable elderly lady had evinced an interest in Miss Bennett. When the interest showed signs of going beyond the stage of kindness and conventional form the respectable elderly lady had stepped in.

She gave Miss Bennett to understand that she, Miss Bennett, had a position in life, and that the position was not one for idle hopes. In fact, she made it plain that if Miss Bennett was not more demure in her attitude toward the nephew, things would happen to him—things having to do with wills and current allowance. So Miss Bennett, who loved the nephew deeply indeed, for his own good said she would see him no more, and what with dealing him one rebuff after another, she saw him no more.

The friend across the street from the Coq Noir was, of course, the nephew, D. Willard Maple by name, a gentleman of the old school, who lived in dusty, misty loneliness on a street bereft of all domesticity by the influx of places like the Coq Noir.

He lived there, clinging in his solitary fashion to the manners and modes of a way of life that no longer existed by any possible stretch of the imagination.

"Do you still love him?" asked Teddy.

Miss Bennett bridled a bit. "I did not say that I ever did love him. You draw conclusions, young man."

"I know," Teddy agreed: "that is part of my job. Do you still love him?"

"I am not saying that I ever loved him," Miss Bennett repeated. "I had great respect for him because he was a most perfect gentleman. I would say that I still retain that respect. I would say that his memory is one that I revere. I had many happy times with him, and one remembers the people that one had happy times with."

"Particularly," Teddy pointed out, "if they were not commonplace times."

"He sounds to me," they heard Clarissa say, "as if he were just another standard model of the sex."

They turned and found her standing beside the table. So full of their conversation had they become that they forgot they were sitting in the Coq Noir night spot, and their ears had become deaf to the soft croonings of Clarissa, featured songstress.

"Oh, you must not say that about Mr. Maple," Miss Bennett protested. "You really must not. He is a very superior person."

Clarissa plucked out her chair and sat down. "Hmmphhh," she hmmphhhed. "I doubt it. I doubt that there is

To page 41

Beauty in brief:

Natural make-up

By Carolyn Earle

● For that natural look in make-up, practise the following simple suggestions.

A FAIR face is a clean face. If your skin is oily, use soap and warm water. If dry, a good cleansing cream.

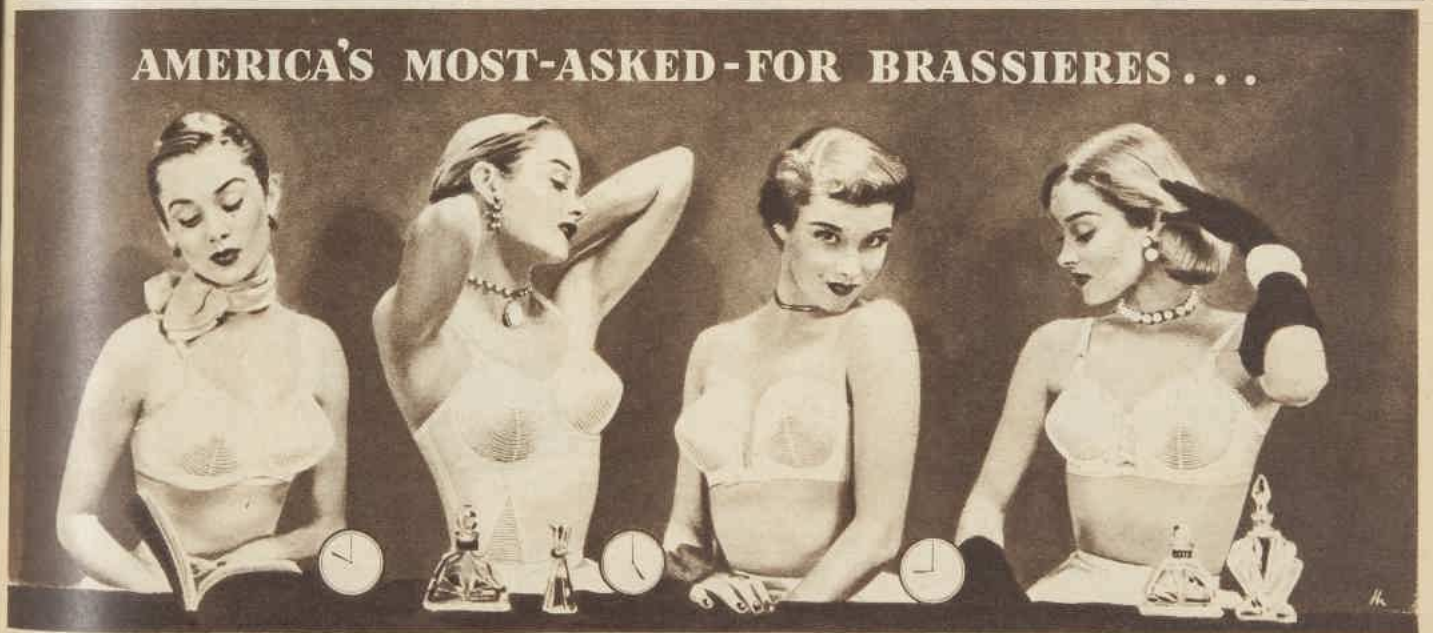
Clean up your skin at least twice a day, and always at night. A make-up "must" is a good foundation to hide tiny blemishes and impart a faint bloom.

A light cream or lotion is best for the dry skin; for oily, a non-greasy liquid or cake make-up.

Never rush on your foundation, but take time to apply it evenly and smoothly. A little foundation is better than too much.

You can use plenty of powder on top of it, especially if you do not use a tinted base under the powder.

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Continuing

It's Never Too Late

from page 39

with a man. Look at this one" — she flicked her thumb at Teddy.

"Not a thought in his head but for good old Theodore Burton. Nice boy, I'll grant you. Things to say, jokes to crack, O.K. as a speculation, but not to be thought of in the way of investment. That's him."

"Maybe you are a little hard on him," Miss Bennett suggested.

"No. I know him like a book. I've turned every page he's got."

Miss Bennett looked at her. "There are different kinds of books," she said.

"You can read a few pages of some kinds of books and you know how they will come out and they bore you. And you can read some other kinds of books, and then go back a while later and read them again, because good authors do not put all they know in the book for you to read. They let you add a little something of your own."

"What I could add to his book right now," Clarissa said, "would hardly be fit for perusal."

Lovers, Miss Bennett thought, really do tiff. She wondered how many people who should have stayed together parted because of such small mischances as not meeting at the same hotel for a spot of tea.

Perhaps a good many; and then, perhaps, they went on and found someone else and forgot about the whole thing. And, on the other hand, perhaps they did not find someone else, and then they—— Miss Bennett thought of herself, really and truly, for one brief, fleeting moment.

She looked at Clarissa. "I think you are being very silly," she said.

"I hope you pay attention to that," Teddy added. "My Aunt Mabel is notorious in the family for being right. The only time she ever went to a horse race she picked eight winners in a row. We always tried to get her to go back, but she never would. Said it was too easy."

"This looks to me like a put-up job," said Clarissa. "It looks to me like you have brought Aunt Mabel along to carry the ball for you. Speak for yourself, Theodore."

Miss Bennett laughed. "And if he did speak for himself? Suppose he popped right up and asked you to marry him? What would you do?"

Then Clarissa laughed. "I'd snort. Like this: Ho."

Teddy protested. "A snort isn't Ho. A snort is Ha. Like this: Ha."

"A snort is a snort any way you make it," Clarissa told him. "Mine go Ho."

She got to her feet and went off back to the piano and the soft songs and the gentle rhythm she gave them.

Miss Bennett left then. Her bender had been quite an adventure, and she wanted now her own small, quiet flat. Teddy assured her he would come and visit her.

"I may need to borrow your oven," he said. "In case this romance goes on the rocks, I may need to stick my head in and end it all."

He put her in a taxi, and as she sat down he leaned in and gave her a nice fat buss on the cheek.

"Good-night, Aunt Mabel," he said, and dashed back into the Coq Noir.

Miss Bennett was pleased. The young, she decided, are better to-day than they used to be. She admitted to herself that her evidence was based on only two specimens, and that true scientific conclusions were drawn from greater research.

But these two seemed like most of the rest of them she saw awander on the streets and in the picture shows and restaurants and other places where they were visible in public.

They seemed franker and gayer than they were some twenty-five years or more ago. Being bussed by one was probably a compliment, and she took it as such.

When Miss Bennett was in her flat she just sat down and relaxed. She was a little tired and a bit excited and a mite happy and a touch sad, all at one and the same time, and she needed a few moments to recover.

After a recovery had set in enough, she unwrapped her negligee that she had been so spendthrift in buying, and spread it out upon the sofa and thought how silly she had been to buy it and decided that once a year she would wear it, the once a year being the anniversary of this day.

Just as the thought came to her that the time had come for her to go to bed and wake up for another day and the soft routine of her life again, there was a knock at her door.

Now it wasn't very late, but even so a knock at Miss Bennett's door after dark was a very late knock.

"Who is there?" she called.

The only answer was another knock. Apparently the only way to deal with this knock was to open the door.

Outside it stood a gentleman, a gentleman with traces of the old school about him; a somewhat dashing gentleman for his years, but obviously a very well-behaved gentleman. It was, in fact, Mr. D. Willard Maple.

"Miss Bennett," he said.

"Mr. Maple," she said.

They looked at each other. "I am being forward," he went on. "I am really being forward, but your nephew assured me——"

"I have no nephew, Mr. Maple," she protested.

He spread his hands in a gentle gesture. "The young man said that he was your nephew. He told me that——"

Miss Bennett understood then. "Was this young man a brassy young man called Teddy Burton?"

"He was." Mr. Maple did not seem at ease standing there in the doorway. "May I come in, Miss Bennett?" he asked.

She stood aside, and he walked in and looked around and put down his hat upon a chair and then sat himself down in another.

Miss Bennett placed herself on the sofa.

"This young man — this nephew," Mr. Maple said, "told me some things."

Miss Bennett said nothing.

"He told me," Mr. Maple went on—"he told me that you love me."

For an instant—for just an instant — Miss Bennett was angry with the nice young Mr. Burton.

But she did love Mr. Maple, that was true, and she had loved him for a long time now and she had thought she would never see him again.

So Miss Bennett once again did to-day what she had never done before. She burst into tears.

While she sobbed she felt an arm go around her back, and she knew that Mr. Maple was sitting beside her and she heard him saying, "And I love you, Edna. I really love you, and always have. I did not know why you stopped seeing me. I thought it was because you no longer liked me. Is it true what that nice young man said? Do you love me?"

Miss Bennett's face was all splattered with tears, but it was a happy face, and the eyes behind the glasses shone—really shone with that happiness.

"I do indeed. I do love you, Willard."

So she sat there and said not a word. It had been a long time since they had seen each other, and there would be a long time while they were together in the future, and the future could take care of conversation. Just now whatever they were to say could be said by silence.

Perhaps the silence lasted for ten minutes and perhaps it lasted for twenty minutes or it might even have been half an hour when it was broken.

It was broken loudly by a great big "bang-bang" upon the door.

Mr. Maple opened the door, and in came, with a bound, young Mr. Teddy Burton, very brassy, and Miss Clarissa, looking equally brassy.

"Was I right?" asked Teddy.

"You were," said Mr. Maple.

Miss Bennett was standing now, and the tears had long since gone.

Teddy patted her on the shoulder. "One good turn, Aunt Mabel," he told her, "deserves another."

"That's right, Aunt Mabel," Clarissa put in. "After you had gone and I was up there yammering at the piano, I got to thinking what you said about books—good books. The ones you said you can read again and find more in them.

"So one thought led to another, and when I went back to the table I asked the young fellow here if he was going to ask me to marry him or if he wasn't. I told him I wanted to know what I was doing with my time."

"So," Teddy went on, "I asked her, and like a sensible girl, she said yes. After the shock wore off, we decided we should come and thank you, and then I told her about you and Mr. Maple."

Clarissa broke in. "'Look what she's done for us,' I told him. 'Do something, chump,' so he went across the street and saw Mr. Maple——"

Miss Bennett was beaming. "Thank you, Clarissa . . . Thank you, Teddy."

Teddy turned to Mr. Maple. He said, "My advice to you, sir, is to let her go on a bender whenever the mood strikes her. Things seem to get done."

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Dangers of fortune-telling

FORTUNE - TELLERS not only cause mischief but sometimes give their clients — particularly young women — mental twists.

Police investigating the fortune - telling racket report that psychiatrists have had to straighten out the minds of some of the victims.

Often men and women complain to police that their homes have been broken up because a fortune-teller has said that either the wife or husband has been unfaithful.

Police say that fortune-tellers usually call themselves psychologists, entertainers, or herbalists in order to cover their true "profession."

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Mrs. Ellen Tuck Astor

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COLOR MAGIC

By JOAN MARTIN

Knowing how to use color is undoubtedly the secret of successful interior decoration. When well used, color can make a room; badly used, it can utterly destroy a room.

I HAVE illustrated this point by showing a room decorated in a dull and uninteresting way, and decorated well and imaginatively.

For the sake of convenience I have labelled the rooms Before and After.

First look at the room Before:

This is typical of so many rooms which have been furnished quite expensively but with little imagination and poor color sense.

The room itself has pleasing proportions. There is good window space, and the fireplace is centrally situated, which is always an asset as it allows the furniture to be comfortably grouped round it for winter living.

However, the homemaker has not made the most of these features.

The picture rail tends to "cut up" the room, and the heavy curtains dominate it.

Incidentally, these curtains would have looked better had they been allowed to fall straight to the floor. The low tie-back is unnecessary.

The autumn color scheme is one I never like—and with good reason. It is much too decided and harsh, and seldom provides a suitable background for flower arrangements or for the numerous ornaments and knick-knacks everyone collects from time to time.

The mottled rug, being circular, again cuts up the room and serves no good purpose. An oblong mat in front of the fireplace would have been far more effective and certainly more useful.

The furniture itself is quite good. The settee and chairs look comfortable, and the tables and chest of drawers are useful and well proportioned.

In fact, complete redecoration shouldn't be an unduly difficult and expensive matter.

Using color as the magic wand, look at the room After:

It seems bigger and more spacious altogether, yet the only structural difference is the abolition of the picture rail.

A large mirror above the mantel gives dignity and height.

The pictures are now grouped attractively above the chest, which, with the other pieces, has been lightened slightly in color.

I have banished "The Laughing Cavalier," heavily framed in gilt, because it is a picture I particularly dislike. But many people like it, and, after all, pictures should be chosen not only for their decorative qualities but because the owner really loves them.

The fireplace painted white looks well against the grey of the walls, and the brick surround has been given a coat of paving paint to match.

The chairs have been slip-covered in light, washable materials. The curtains are of white organdie, softly frilled on the edge and looped high to cascade attractively right to the floor.

These curtains look glamorous, fresh, and much more expensive than they really are, yet they wash and wear extremely well. I know because I have had similar ones in my own house for years with great success.

I have added a stool for extra seating when necessary, and for the utmost comfort when used as an extension of the armchair.

I have moved the table that stood in front of the curtains. A little of it can be seen beside the fireplace within reach of the settee, providing an excellent place for the odd ash-tray, lamp, book, etc.

A table directly in front of a window or windows is seldom successful, as it not only suffers from the direct rays of the sun, but every breeze that blows is a hazard for whatever vase or ornament may be on it.

Instead of the table I have used a plant-stand to give a touch of life and color to the room, and because flowers in any form are decoration in themselves.

Wire stands similar to this one can be found in second-hand shops and are most attractive used both indoors and out.

This room may seem too pastel in coloring to suit everyone's taste, but it has been made especially so to emphasise the difference before and after redecoration.

The same magical effect can be achieved with stronger color, although it stands to reason that the room will not look quite so spacious.

You could, for instance, have the walls painted a deep sage-green, use a glazed chintz of floral design with a background of raspberry-red for the settee and one chair, and cover the other two in a plain or self-striped material that would tone with them or pick up the color of the walls.

BEFORE



HEAVY COLORS and unimaginative decoration of this room are typical of many living-rooms. Compare this picture with the light and attractive treatment (below) given the same room.

AFTER



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Continuing . . .

The Secret of the Purple Reefs

from page 3

almond, but I forgot to bring them."

"After such carelessness, I do not know that I care to eat!" Joseph said, smiling. At the sight of fish, he groaned in earnest. "No more is expected of me?"

"Taste it!" Henri commanded.

Joseph tasted.

The fish had a meatlike richness and was smeared with its own brown gravy. The savor of eggs and herbs had blended with the flavor of the fish, and the flavor of the fish with the stuffing.

It was the masterpiece of the meal, followed by coffee, saved for them by Daphne.

Henri stirred the fire to light, then he said: "I walked the south dunes roughly while the conchs simmered. In a hollow towards the south tip there is a bed of gathered and wired sponges that have been left to rot."

Joseph looked at him, startled. And Henri knew that in his mind he visualised the slow disintegration of the skeletal structure of sponge in this salt-saturated air. For it could be that the sponges had been fresh and yellow as a flower garden two years before.

To the brothers this had the possibility of great meaning. Jacques and Christian were spongers. If this had been their haul, it had been strung out after the passage of the hurricane. Yet something had prevented their gathering it.

Joseph said slowly, "Many things, of course, may happen to two men in a little boat—a sudden squall and upset where there are sharks; an accident while diving; carelessness and the drifting of the boat beyond catching while the men are in the water."

"It is still a strange thing," Henri said. "Two men of the island were absent sponging. While it was not thought that they were here, it is not impossible that they had come here. Certainly men sponging this reef were interrupted. They had a good haul, washed and drying. They never returned for the haul. Nor did Jacques and Christian or the crew of the Christophe ever return."

They listened to the voice of the sea, hardly audible by day but all about them in the darkness, and to the bowing of the salt grass in the wind.

"Suppose," Henri said, "that there was something here — its nature we cannot guess — but something most unusual that was known to or had affected the spongers. In pausing here our brother could have learned of it or become involved in it."

"But what, Henri? If he had found the spongers missing and perhaps suspected foul play, why did he not report it in the Isle of Palms?"

Henri sighed. "Had the Christophe never reached the Isle of Palms it would be easier! One might then assume that whatever unknown thing befell befell here, destroying both ship and spongers."

Joseph nodded. "To-morrow we will search more closely. Meantime, since here is perhaps a stealer of ships—and we cannot afford to lose our small ship —we had best swim back to the launch and to bed!"

.

Further search in blue and blowing morning revealed nothing save a stronger impression of the fury of the hurricane that had swept the reefs. Henri and Joseph established their gasoline cache and put up a notice: NEEDED BY THE BROTHERS CHRISTOPHE.

Such little hoards were almost invariably inviolate in the Caribbean for no man knew when his own life might hang on finding safe his cans of fuel.

With the work finished, the brothers looked over the lonely wonder of reefs and dunes. "Joseph, it is your thought the sponge haul was that of Jacques and Christian?" Henri said.

"If it could be shown that Jacques and Christian were not working the beds off Gracias a Dios, I might think so. If they were—as we believe—off a Dios, why should they have crossed the seas to come here where sponge is scant?" Joseph asked.

"Suppose merely that Tobias and M'sieur Latour are right in that Jacques and Christian were too weatherwise to have been caught by hurricane—that they were safe through it. We have then three mysteries: The fate of Jacques and Christian. The lesser mystery of the unclaimed sponges. Three unrelated mysteries are too many."

"That could be," Joseph said. "But if you connect them all to this place, you have something hard to believe. You must think that against reason Jacques and Christian came here, and for that reason were lost. You must think that the Christophe touched here, and that, for this, death followed her; that for something seen or known or done here, men were struck down."

Henri said, slowly, "I think that Jacques and Christian were too wise to be lost in storm. And if they were lost for unknown reason, is it not more credible that the unknown thing was in one spot rather than hither and yon across the Caribbean?"

Joseph's quiet eyes regarded the morning sunlight. "As you know, I am a dull and unimaginative fellow. At thines of the hands, I am good, but for saying, 'It must have been thus or thus!' I must look to you, Henri."

"All my instinct says 'Search here!' "

"For what, brother?"

"For conchs and sponges and sea things for the good doctor at the museum—and for what else the sea may tell us! For what may be worth salvage from the steamer yonder." He grinned. "For the Three Galleons—who knows? For I know not what. Here, at least, for the first time the trail has said to us, 'That is most strange!' "

Ten minutes later the launch was riding beautifully over a blue and tumbling sea on her way toward the Isle of Palms. Forty hours later they sighted the first mangrove flanks of the Greater Antilles through misting rain tinged with rainbows, and presently were threading their course between the skirts of dripping mangroves and the grey sadness of rotting beacons.

Occasionally a creek showed small wharves and strung nets of fishermen. In most cases the owners were away, but wherever smoke showed, Joseph put the launch in and they chatted in Spanish over cups of burnt-flavored Cuban coffee sweetened to syrup with condensed milk.

Many of the men had come to the swamps but recently, and Henri and Joseph could say only, "Spread the word that the Brothers Christophe are seeking news of their brother and all things pertaining to the Christophe."

But one old man had joined in the great search. Unexpectedly, he volunteered the information that Ashby, "one of the Christophe's fortunate in that he had disembarked," was now living some twenty miles to the north. The old man grinned. "He is now of the retired. Wouldn't tell anyone but you local boys — though you won't learn any-

To page 45

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thing from him. He's just a scared rabbit."

In the bays and creeks of the Caribbean were many of the retired — French, German, American, a polished Englishman, perhaps — living from the morning seas on some sweltering estuary or swamp fringe and vanishing into the mangroves at the approach of coastguard or naval craft or police launch.

Between them and the lands whence they came stood the crimes of theft or murder or treason. They lived for the small scraps of news from the lands to which they could never return. Yet when those came who could bring news, the retired were afraid to speak to them.

And when Henri and Joseph at last found the battered wharf and shack up the hidden creek, they found it empty. Heavy rain had set in and Henri stood on the dripping wharf and addressed the rain-bent wall of mangroves: "We are here as friends seeking information only. Observe, we wear no uniforms and carry no weapons!"

Leaden rain roared across the swamp and ran as small rivers across the wharf. Then the leaves parted and a small, stained man with a disproportionately large chest stepped out to the planks.

"I was back in the woods," Ashby said rapidly, looking from one to the other of them. "Guess you thought I'd cleared out." He laughed to convey the absurdity of the idea. "Plenty of retired men around the creeks. Run like rabbits." His manner became that of recitation.

"Now me, I only stay here because I like it. I can go back to the States any time I want. You been in the States lately to see how things are going there? Some time since I met a man from the States." The desperate hunger of the exile stood in his eyes. He recollected himself and said, "Come in! Come in!"

He led the way into the dark dark where the rain was like drums on the iron roof.

"We have not been in the States for six years," Joseph said kindly. "But we are on our way to Tampa, and when we return we will bring you news."

Ashby's hands shook. "While you're there you might look up a Mrs. Combs — knew her sort of casually once. Better not mention me. Just see how she and the kids are doing. Youngest kid must be around ten now."

His hands shook so that he spilled the tobacco from his cigarette paper. "She lives — used to live — on Wharf Street. Just take a gander at her and the kids. Don't mention me."

"We will act with care," Joseph said, "and we will pretend we are looking for another woman of the same name."

"Not important," Ashby said, flushing under his greying stubble. "Just sort of curious." He cut himself a slice of raw conch meat and ate it hastily. "Never get enough conch." He looked up. "What was that you were asking me?"

"I am Henri Henri Christophe and this is my brother Joseph Henri Christophe," Henri said. "We are seeking answer to the loss of the motorship Christophe."

Ashby stood up and his scarred hands gripped the table edge while his glance darted between their faces, and his constant shaking was more noticeable.

"The motorship Christophe? The lost motorship? Yes, the lost motorship." His haunted eyes seemed again to be asking them something, but what Henri did not know. "Could have been lost myself with the motorship!" Ashby said.

His glance fled between their faces. He began to eat conch meat again.

"It is because you were a passenger on the last voyage that we have come. We are thankful that you disembarked and were safe," Joseph said. "The voyage from the island to the Isle of Palms, was it uneventful, m'sieur? We are seeking any smallest thing that was not as it always was."

"Got through one shipwreck!" Ashby chattered. "Could have been in another! See? Could have gone on with her for Tampa!" He became assertive. "Can go to the States whenever I want! Not like these retired fellows——"

"We are puzzled that our brother was two days late at the Isle of Palms."

"Late at the Isle of Palms? That was for looking for the men of the Webber! Me, I got through the wreck of the Webber, but I could have gone on with the motorship——"

"We are puzzled that our brother should have searched for two days for men of the Webber when he could not have known that they had not reached shore."

Ashby struggled with his conch, then said rapidly, "Tom Webber, the owner, paid him to search. Tom Webber, the owner, was concerned for the men. Tom Webber, the owner, thought the men might be adrift." He stopped and his sad eyes darted. "That was why!"

"All was well with our brother and the Christophe?"

"Never better! Never better! Fine man, Captain Malcolm. Kind man—spoke well to everyone. Should not have been lost, Captain Malcolm!" To the surprise of the brothers, sudden tears were running in the stubble of Ashby's wizened cheeks.

Clutching Henri's arm, he said fiercely, "Read in the papers a ship sinks, but they don't know how it was, don't know about kids waiting for presents that won't get presents! They don't know how it was at all when men don't go home!" He looked down and stumbled to the shelves to get salt for his conch.

After a moment, Joseph asked, "M'sieur, was anyone else at the Purple Reefs when our brother touched there? Or was there sign that any craft save the wrecked Webber had been there?"

Ashby dropped the salt. "Other people than them with the Christophe? No! Why should there be?"

"Near the time of the Christophe's loss, two spongers of the island also met disaster. On the dunes of the Purple Reefs are many sponges that have been strung, yet were not claimed. We would know their story. You have not by any chance been to the Purple Reefs since your passing with the Christophe, m'sieur?"

"I? Been to the reefs? I got too much to do! Haven't even had time to go to the States! Planning a trip to the States pretty soon now!"

"M'sieur, you are positive that there was nothing untoward in the Christophe's trip to the Isle of Palms?" Henri asked. "No most trivial thing?"

"No! No! No! How many times do I have to tell you no?" Ashby shouted.

"Thank you, m'sieur," Joseph said. "And we will call upon your friend, Mrs. Combs."

Ashby flushed violently. "Just curious. Take it kindly." He looked at them, and his eyes yearned.

As they swung into the launch, Henri said, "Oh, one thing more. The brass is still with the steamer. We had thought we might make a little with salvage. Do you know if any have bought the rights?"

Standing at the edge of the dock, Ashby shook with a sudden and greater agitation, and his face twisted strangely.

"Don't work her! Don't go near her! A cursed ship—a bad ship! All bad, like the Hereras!" He leaned to them across the rail of the dock. "A wreck isn't like it gets in the papers. Good men go with ships—good men went with the Christophe—good men — good men who would do a favor. Don't go near her! Let her alone!"

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The brothers stared, astonished and pitying. "We will be careful, m'sieur," Joseph said.

As they drew away from the rain-drenched creek, Ashby shouted after them, "Don't go near her!"

From the mangrove bank behind him, two small figures had slipped to join him — two half-naked and very wet little boys. Ashby tenderly took a hand of each as he continued to stare after the launch.

"Poor soul!" Henri said softly.

"Madame Combs is doubtless his wife," Joseph commented. "He has seemingly been an exile for a great while — and now must actually hide. And the little fellows are 'children of exile'—and so there is another reason that he can never go home, whatever the first one may have been."

"Poor soul," Henri said again. "And I think M'sieur Latour was right in that he is a good man."

ONWARD the Sea Lily slid through the bottle-green water between the bird-thick cays toward the Isle of Palms, the engines making a lonely sound above the tinkling patter of rain.

It rounded a last headland, and the sails of cutters rising above mangroves marked the still-unseen river, while the cream towers and red roofs of the town dimmed to the upsweep of shadow as the sun vanished behind purple thunderheads.

Deep evening came suddenly as the launch entered the river and tied up at the dock.

"I wish to make an adjustment to the port engine," Joseph said, when they had completed the formalities at the ancient Port Authority Building. He counted the small amount of change in the sharkskin purse and frowned. "I may even have to buy a three-eighths bolt."

Henri touched the hard warmth of his brother's shoulder. "Do not plunge into the expenditure until I return, Joseph!" He gave Joseph's arm a squeeze and crossed the room to the desk of the port officer, who was a small and dapper man in a wonderful uniform.

"Pardon, m'sieur, but as you may guess, we seek all things pertaining to the Christophe. Was it you, perhaps, who were on duty at the time she last touched here?"

The port officer, one of whose sidelines was the collection of junk for sale at exorbitant prices to distressed mariners, was equally noted for his meanness and for his desire to display authority. He now made notes in a small book and touched his small moustache without bothering to answer.

Henri unwrapped a flagon of the mango wine for which Home Island was famous. Bowing, he said, "Perhaps this would refresh you?"

The official changed his manner, and produced wine glasses from beneath the desk. "For you only, m'sieur," Henri murmured.

"At your service, senor!"

"First a triviality, m'sieur. I wonder if we might purchase a bolt from the assortment yonder?" He indicated a pile of bolts and rusty tools in a corner behind the desk. "Do not, however, try to aid us if the sale of the bolt would involve long accounting to the authorities——"

"Account for a bolt? I am authority here! Take all the bolts—and the old tools, too! I was about to have them swept out."

"My thanks, m'sieur . . . M'sieur, the records of the landing of the shipwrecked men, M'sieurs Webber and Ashby, perhaps you have them?"

"I have all records of all transactions!"

"As they are in Spanish, and I do not read it well, you would perhaps translate?"

The records and the port officer's recollections, while flowery, were clear enough. The passengers, Senors Webber and Ashby, had brought in the incoming mail and told their story of the loss of the Webber and of their arrival at Home Island; the five Herera brothers had very definitely made land at the little town to the north-east shortly after the storm.

Since no reports had been received of any other members of the Webber's crew, it had to be presumed that six of her men were still unaccounted for.

Senor Webber had expressed great concern and had been assured that a search for the lost men would be started instantly by the navy of the republic. The six missing seamen had never been found.

"M'sieur, you had seen the lights of the Christophe go onward?"

"Yes."

"All was as always? She was on the Tampa course?"

"All was exactly as always or I should have recorded the fact!"

"M'sieur, is it known where Thomas Webber, the owner of the Webber, went?"

"Eh? Went home to the States, to West Florida. Near the southern tip of the State, on river near the Bay of Jewfish. He has long owned a great tourist resort for millionaires who fish and hunt the deer. Charming man, the Senor Webber! Laughing from morning till night."

The wine was well down in the flagon. The official lowered his head on his arms and was asleep.

"We are lucky in that M'sieur Webber's home is almost upon our route," Henri reported to Joseph. "We may know more when we have talked with him. Meantime, here is your bolt and assorted mechanical things, with the compliments of m'sieur, the port official."

"I have improved the carburettor of the port engine," Joseph said. "Such simple things must be my contribution."

"That you are Joseph and a great strength at all times is your contribution," Henri said fondly. "Let us draw out to the ship-anchorage and wait for dawn. From here we must say, 'Somewhere now it perhaps befell!'"

.

With the first silver light, the Sea Lily moved between the leaden ghosts of keys. And the brothers knew the strangeness that from some of these keys the birds had seen the Christophe passing, other keys perhaps she had not passed.

Yet of all sections of the ship's route, this stagnant, key-crowded waterway from the Isle of Palms to the Cape was its safest and least isolated.

But at evening, as sunset crimsoned the lighthouse of San Antonio, they knew that almost certainly the Christophe had not passed on the last journey. For here it had been Malcolm Christophe's custom to run close to the light, signalling the keeper.

On the last trip he had not done this . . .

At the meeting of the blue waters of the Gulf and the strange sea of grass and water that was the Everglades, they swung to hug the coast of Florida.

As Joseph twined the launch through sweltering mangroves in late afternoon, they heard the voices of children. Sliding into a wider waterway, they saw a large, flat-bottomed boat, so crowded with children that it seemed in danger of sinking. The boat was drifting rapidly seaward, but the children waved and cheered.

Jammed amongst the children, a sunburned, brightly golden-haired girl of perhaps sixteen years of age wrenched at the starting cord of an outboard motor, at the same time shouting, "Hey! Hey, you in the launch!"

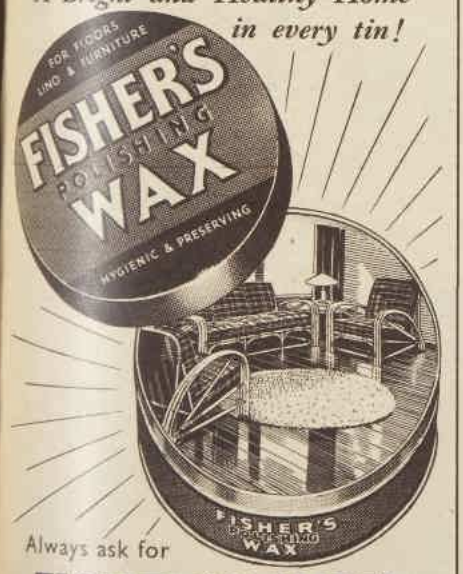
Joseph headed the launch toward her.

Thrusting back her hair with her arm, she grinned.

"We can't start it. You have

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Continuing

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. . . ." Turning, she pushed the children away vigorously and cheerfully. "Get back, you two!"

The bow-ward collapse of the children revealed that she was wearing fewer clothes than the amazed Henri and Joseph had ever seen any woman wear north of the South Seas. Joseph's face expressed his disapproval, while to Henri the suit gave her a curiously childlike innocence.

Like a child bursting with life, she was never quite still, and her hand, when it touched his as he worked at the engine, was like the friendly hand of a child.

"Thanks a lot," she said as the engine started. She laughed. "I'd hate to be washed out to sea with this cargo of kids."

"We will make certain that you reach shore," Joseph said coldly.

The Brothers Christophe followed the overladen craft into the winding estuary and to within sight of an old wharf on the river bank, beyond which a straggling road ran to a tin-and-clapboard settlement. The girl stopped the motor.

There was now something of anxiety and sudden defiance in her manner. "Don't tell the folks I had the kids out! Kids' folks are always fussing about something."

"We do not know the parents," Joseph said. "Nor do we gossip." He frowned. "This is a poor boat in which to go to sea."

"We didn't go to sea," she grinned. "We were took . . . Thanks again for the start."

"It was a pleasure," Henri said, smiling at her. "M'selle, is this Jewfish Bay?"

"Right, monsieur!" she said impertinently, laughing at her own attempt at French. She frowned in question. "What are you? Frenchies from New Orleans?"

"No, m'selle, we are West Indians," Henri said. "I am Henri Christophe and this is my brother Joseph."

She stood looking at them with a strange tenderness on her face. "You're nice, you two!"

Joseph blushed and Henri smiled.

"M'selle, we are seeking for M'sieur Thomas Webber. His tourist resort is located near here?"

"Tourist resort? Rat's nest's a better name! You passed it. You got to know the way in. . . . I'm Tom Webber's niece. Tom isn't there."

"He will shortly return?"

She shrugged. "How can you tell with Tom? He's in New Orleans."

"Should he return ere we do, you might tell him the Brothers Christophe are seeking him, to talk with him of the Christophe."

She nodded. "O.K. And so long! . . . You're nice, you two!"

The launch turned back to sea. "She was charming," Henri said, smiling.

"She was indecent!" Joseph answered.

Henri smiled more widely. "A child is not indecent. She was like a child."

Joseph snorted. "My sympathy is with the parents. She is not fit to be with little children."

"The little children were having a particularly nice time," Henri said.

.

Red sunset two days later saw the brothers running up Tampa Bay. Here they knew that the Christophe had not come on the last voyage. The unknown disaster lay behind them.

The formalities of entry having been attended to, the Sea Lily was presently bumping lightly in black and oily water against a dark wharf heaped with banana bunches.

A large man with stubbled beard and a thin man with buck teeth stood at the edge of the dock and regarded the launch grinningly. In the door of a dimly lighted shed, four other men lounged.

"You boys got fruit?" the big man asked.

"Yes, m'sieur," Henri said. "We have a small deck cargo of bananas."

"Where you get 'em?"

"We obtained them at our last stop for water near Cape San Antonio. We have paid duty and the fruit has been inspected," Joseph said.

"Well, you may as well tip 'em in the bay right now!" the big man said. "There's a little banana trouble in this port and no one but our own little banana company brings bananas in here!"

"Who maintains that save your company, m'sieur?" Joseph asked politely. "We were not informed of any embargo by the authorities. We would wish the statement of an official before we abandoned our bananas."

The big man shouted, "Hey, Rick! These boys want a official statement!" The men at the door of the shack parted and a uniformed police officer came out.

"We were instructed to unload our bananas here," Joseph explained as the officer reached the edge of the dock. "These men seek to prevent it."

"That so?" the officer asked the big man.

"Weren't doing a thing," the big man said, grinning. "These Frenchies aren't acting nice."

"You hear that?" the officer asked Henri and Joseph. "You men start any trouble and we know what to do about it!" He lounged back toward the shed, turned and roared, "Get going!"

The two men turned, slouched back into the dimly lighted shed, and banged the door. Starry darkness took the wharf.

"We have a right to land and sell our fruit," Joseph said stubbornly.

"True," Henri said, "but from what we have heard and seen, we are more likely to do it by discretion than by right. Meantime, we wish to see Madame Combs, and we cannot leave the Sea Lily here, and we cannot pay for a private dock."

They found a small, deserted sandspit draped in black lace of casuarinas, anchored the floating banana bowl that was the Sea Lily, and waded ashore.

Under the first street light, Joseph got out the sharkskin purse. "Do you think thirty-five cents each is too much to allow for such meals as we have to buy?"

"I do not think we will grow overfat on it," Henri said. "By the way, Joseph, I have good news for you. It will only cost you three cents to mail your letter to the gentleman who placed the message in the bottle."

"Having lost his dime, I suppose I should return the change."

"I think you might retain that as repayment for service," Henri said. Before a pawnbroker's window, Joseph stopped to study the glittering musical instruments. Henri asked, "Why do you smile?"

"I was thinking how odd the human mind is," Joseph said. "One of the few things I have ever really wanted was a flute—of all ridiculous things!"

JOSEPH laughed at his foolishness, and the two went on through the increasing crowd past a store where belaced wisps of cream and lilac and pink filled the window that advertised Bargain Specials in Nylon Handkerchiefs.

Following Henri toward an inexpensive cafe, Joseph said, "Daphne makes her handkerchiefs out of flour sacks." But Henri did not hear him, because a bus was passing.

The cafe was rich with scents of frying shrimp. Its tables had gay, red-checked cloths.

Joseph said, "I would only care for coffee." He rose. "Would you excuse me a minute, Henri?"

Threading his way hugely through the crowd, he returned to the scene of the handkerchief sale and looked long in the window. Entering the shop, he confronted the salesgirl.

"M'selle," he said, bowing, "have you a handkerchief with lace on it for not more than forty-five cents?"

"Gee!" the girl said, studying his black hair, tanned skin, and general immensity. "Where have you been all my young life?"

"Pardon?" Joseph said, then smiled, comprehending. "I did not understand. My brother and I are of Home Island in the Caribbean, m'selle. It is a small island, but very beautiful."

"That wasn't exactly what I meant. But thanks for the geography. What was it you wanted?"

"A handkerchief, m'selle, with lace on it, but not more than forty-five cents, please."

The girl brought out a collection of cheaply sewn handkerchiefs with minute appliques of coarse lace. Joseph touched them dubiously. "They are not right—the lace should be part of them." He glanced toward a showcase. "Something more as these."

"Those are ten-dollar handkerchiefs."

"Oh! That would be too much. It wouldn't matter if there was not much lace, but it should be good lace and part of the handkerchief. These do not look like her."

"What's she like?"

"She is dark and very beautiful, and always, every minute of the day, she is doing something for other people. She does not have time to think about herself. I could not take her a common handkerchief!" He thought, creasing his forehead, "You have nothing that is really good, but has been shop-soiled? I could wash and iron it."

The salesgirl glanced at his huge hands and the resoluteness of his stand at the counter. "Wait while I look!"

In the sample room she flicked through boxes and drew out a delicate cobweb of nylon and drawn work. She stooped to rub it on the floor.

"How about this?" she asked, returning to show the handkerchief.

The red of pleasure swept up Joseph's face. "That is exactly right. Thank you a million times, m'selle!"

Getting out the sharkskin purse, he counted out the money. "Thank you for taking the trouble to find it for me, m'selle!"

"Skip it!" the girl said. "Come in again!"

After midnight, Wharf Street was one of Tampa's less desirable areas. Poorly lighted, much of it in complete darkness, it was yet astir. Furtive feet moved in every wall shadow. As they walked, the brothers kept to the centre of the street. Then they were among the ruins of one-time estates, and banyans crowded overhead and dropped jungle-like aerials.

At the dead end of the street was a high iron fence with an elaborate gate, but the driveway was blocked with a mad growth of pandanuses and banyans. The light of a match showed a narrow path disappearing between the walls of vegetation. The gate was chained and padlocked.

"This is it," Henri said.

They knocked on the iron number-plate of the gate, then called politely. "Let us go over the fence," Henri said. "We cannot waste to-morrow."

Piled leaves crushed under their feet as they dropped on the inner side of the fence and brushed along the path. Presently they were feeling their way under huger banyans and between entanglements of thorny shrubs.

Then a harsh female voice said, "Get out with your hands up!" The barrel of a shotgun gleamed in the starlight, the roar of the gun split the night, and a charge of shot passed over their heads. The brothers stood with their hands up.

"Madame, we are trespassing, but honestly!" Henri said. "We have a message from a friend!" Henri explained.

"What friend?"

"From your husband, M'sieur Combs!" Joseph said hastily.

The shotgun wobbled, a flashlight shone in their faces, and the harsh voice asked fiercely, "Where's he at? What's he like? And who are you guys?"

"He is in the Caribbean. He is a small man with a great

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Continuing . . The Secret of The Purple Reefs

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chest. We are the Brothers Christophe, of Home Island, madame," Henri said.

Above the flashlight's glow a strange, lined face with deep-set eyes and strong jaw regarded them from under the brim of a man's hat. Down the furrowed cheeks the glitter of tears was running. "Where's he at? What's he doin'? Is he took bad? I ain't known if he was dead or alive — I ain't known!" She wiped her tears with her fist. "Where is he? I just ain't known!"

"Madame, I have in a manner breached a confidence, for I feared that you might take aim at my brother," Joseph said. "Your husband is alive and is in great concern for you, but he wished us to learn how you fared, without speaking of him. It is our thought that he is in sore trouble."

"He would be or it wouldn't be him!" Her eyes searched their faces. "He ain't dyin'? He ain't crippled? If he ain't, what can ail him?"

"M'sieur Combs was strong and active," Henri assured her. "We do not have his confidence save in the matter of ascertaining your welfare. We owe you our apologies for troubling you at this hour."

"Troublin' me? It's like gettin' a million dollars! Does th' little fellow still eat raw conch? I'm called Ma. Everyone calls me Ma. I'm sorry if I scairt you, but I got folks trained to stay outer here. Come inside! There's coffee on the stove. Just watch th' steps." She appeared to sink into the dark ground. From somewhere below their feet her muffled voice commanded, "Come right on in!"

Parting a spread of banyan leaves, Henri and Joseph descended a faintly rocking companionway to a leaf-hidden houseboat moored against the cliff of the bank.

"How nice it is!" Joseph said of the floating house, in a farther room of which towheaded children could be seen sleeping in bunks made from packing cases.

"It is purty," Ma Combs said. "It's th' only shantyboat with a estate fence! Set down!"

She set tin cups on the table before them.

"What I can't figure is how he's in any more trouble than he was! He—got in trouble a long ways back. But he'd let me know where he was at, up an' down th' islands, then workin' for Webber, an' send every penny he could for me an' th' kids. Then he stops—just like that!" She snapped her gnarled thumb and finger.

"Perhaps if you talked to M'sieur Webber, the owner of the Webber ——" Henri suggested.

"Talk to Webber? I talked to him till I'm black in th' face! He just says everythin' was fine as silk!" She grimaced.

"Seems I did Webber wrong in some of it. I figured he might have throwed away his ship for insurance. I got old Mr. Atterbury, the marine lawyer who's my friend, to learn how the insurance was on th' Webber. She weren't over-insured. She was a good ship an' only insured for th' mortgage. Seems Webber surely lost money when she was wrecked like he howls."

Assisted by Henri and Joseph, she served coffee. "I ain't askin' you to break your given word, but can you just tell me where my poor guy's at?"

"Not without his permission," Joseph said.

"Then tell him th' kids an' me are fine! Tell him ever' one of them helps all they can! We've never took relief! Tell him I don't care what he's gone an' done! An' I mean whatever! Tell him I'm for him!"

"We will tell him, madame."

"You will come back? You will tell me how he's doin'? . . . I'll show you th' customers' bell in th' bushes by th' gate. I sell 'shine to keep th' kids. I make th' best danged 'shine you ever tasted! Let me give you boys some!"

"We do not drink, madame, but thank you," Henri said, rising. "The good coffee was what we wanted. And we will see him and come back. And you must remember that he loves you very much." He smiled down at her. "We can see why."

As their footsteps echoed in the darkness of the predawn streets, Joseph said, "What a brave, good woman, Madame Combs. One wishes that one could aid her with her husband."

"One would also wish that one knew the reason for the strange thing upon which madame has set her hand," Henri said thoughtfully. "M'sieur Ashby, who is also M'sieur Combs, and also, I think, a good man, has been an exile from his country for a long while. But he was not of the retired. He had reasons for being careful with the law, but they were not so serious that he hid.

"He was openly with the Webber as her engineer. The Webber was lost, he was ship-wrecked and reached Home Island. He embarked with the Christophe and landed in the Isle of Palms. Since then he has been of the retired — he is afraid. He fears the Webber. He hates the Hereras. It is my thought that he is afraid of M'sieur Webber. Why? We do not know."

He frowned, then concluded, "Between his service with the Webber and his retirement something must have befallen to make him afraid as he was not afraid before. He do not go to the creeks and t' he swamps without tragic reaso." Nor without reason does a fond husband cease to communicate with his wife or a father to learn of his little ones."

"He left the Christophe openly at the Isle of Palms. Also, do not forget that in heart he is torn two ways—a thing that is the tragedy of many exiles."

"True." Henri nodded.

In the morning the brothers peddled their bananas, receiving many compliments both on the good quality of the fruit and the good manners of its vendors. By mid-afternoon they had been appalled by the prices of new wheel-chairs and had inserted a newspaper advertisement: "Wanted by the Brothers Christophe, a wheeled chair for their Aunt Caroline," the results of which they could learn on the next trip.

They had also bought the materials needed for a shallow diving outfit and had made surprisingly profitable arrangements for the sale of such sea fans and shells as they might collect.

"Also the postal authorities, who were very kind, believe that the little ports in Yucatan and Nicaragua that the Christophe served on her southern run are still in need of mail service," Joseph reported happily.

"The business venture goes on nicely," Henri agreed. "Also we have seen some of those whom we must see in seeking the Christophe. This morning I talked with M'sieur Atterbury, Madame Combs' marine lawyer. He is a kind man of highest standing. He is very positive that I owe M'sieur Webber an apology, for while it seemingly could not have affected the Christophe had there been question in the loss of the Webber, I had questioned—and it is well to know."

He went on, "Now, on our way south, we can seek the Hereras. And when next we come here we will try to go to Miami and see the men of weather and the navy men who were upon the Purple Reefs. They may have seen something the meaning of which they did not know, as they would not know the meaning of the unclaimed sponges."

The bay was wild white under a slashing, purple shower as the Sea Lily flew through the north entrance with the savage tide and turned for the Channel of Yucatan. Wild grey wisps of rain swept the Gulf, and as the Tampa light vanished behind the downpour the Sea Lily was hailed by an incoming launch.

Apparently the men on it had combined fishing with whisky, for they roared with song and the helmsman crowded the Sea Lily dangerously in the heavy seas. Among the drinkers were the large man and the thin man from the fruit docks.

The big man shouted, "Sure hope you boys didn't try anythin' foolish with them bananas—or you better hope we don't get to hear of it!"

The launches were past each other in the rain, but the laughter of the men came down the wind.

"I had not thought of carrying bananas regularly," Joseph said, flushing. "But the attitude of those men tempts one."

"Joseph, where is my peacemaker?" Henri asked.

Joseph blushed more deeply. "They are so odious. One does not like them to think they have had their way," Joseph said, taking the Sea Lily over a crest.

"Meantime, cross your fingers that we find the Hereras without having to go to the Low Cays."

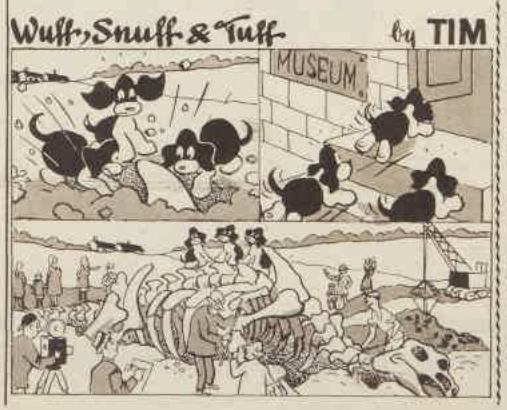
"You still think that something strange, that affected our brother and the Christophe, happened upon the Purple Reefs?"

"I am still not satisfied that our brother spent two days looking for men from the Webber who could have been ashore!"

To be continued

FOR THE CHILDREN

Wuff, Snuff & Tuff by TIM



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FRESH SHAPES IN AUTUMN HATS

The very newest hat silhouette is small, exciting, and sculptured to the head – and nearly every hat sparkles with bright jewels.



FURRY WHITE CELLOPHANE STRAW makes the glamorous toque, above, designed by Jean Barthet. The circle embroidery on the hat is black wool and is matched to the cuffs on the gloves.



DELECTABLY PRETTY, Lilly Dache's fabulous hood, above, ties demurely under the chin, as above, or the ties may be centre-wrapped or fastened at nape of the neck centre back.



COCKTAIL HAT in amethyst velvet, above, is embroidered in silver beads and curved back from the hairline. Model by Jacques Heim.



EVENING CAPS, by Schiaparelli, left, one jewel-trimmed, the other made in mink with an open crown. Both models illustrate the neat sculptured look.

HELMET in emerald-green French veiling from a special collection by Lilly Dache, above, has a sparkling chignon of bronze-and-gold sequined flower tips.

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Beautify your home with WALDEC



Taubmans amazing
INDOORS-OUTDOORS FLAT-FINISH PAINT

These color-photos illustrate the delightful results obtained by painting with Taubmans Waldec.

INDOORS—Paint Waldec straight over plaster, fibrous-plaster, cement-rendering, hardboards, softboards, asbestos cement sheeting or wallpaper. No preparation needed except to remove old kalsomine or water paint, if any. Waldec dries rapidly—you can hang pictures and curtains and start using rooms the same day.

OUTDOORS—Waldec color transforms brick, cement-rendering, stone, fibro or previously painted surfaces. Where two or more surfaces are combined, an all-over "facial" with Waldec unifies the textures and adds new style.

COLORS—Almost unlimited choice of pastels and deep colors.

Waldec painting is easy!

Little or no preparation is needed; one coat is often enough. This "synthetic-emulsion" paint mixes with water, goes on smoothly with brush or spray-gun over almost any surface. Joins don't show; if you miss a place, touch it up and when it dries you won't see a trace. Waldec is so dense that it covers up old faults at the same time as it adds fresh new beauty.

Waldec dries rapidly—indoors or outdoors—even in cool weather. Paint with Waldec any season of the year.





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KNITTED ARGYLE IS NEW U.S. FASHION

A smart new American fashion, the Argyle jacket, is regarded as high fashion for late afternoon and after-dark wear.

DIRECTIONS for knitting the checked Argyle on the right are given below.

Materials: 11 (11-12) 1oz. skeins Lincoln Mills "Daphne" crochet wool; the original was worked in 7 (7-8) skeins 1oz. white, 4 (4-4) skeins 1oz. black (this is the only wool which should be used); 1 pair each Nos. 10 and 12 knitting needles (long).

Tension: 7½ sts. and 9 rows to 1in.

Measurements: To fit 32in. (34-36in.) bust. Length from top of shoulder (excluding band) 18½ (18½-21) in.; length of side seam (excluding band) 10¼ (10¼-12¼) in.; width across sleeve at upper arm 8 (8¼-8¼) in.

BACK

Using white wool and No. 10 needles, commencing at lower edge cast on 133 (141-149) sts.

Work in st-st. starting at B (B-A) thus:—

Follow chart across, then omitting centre stitch work back to beginning for other half of design.

Work in this manner until C is reached, then work from A to C twice more.

Sleeve Shaping: Keeping continuity of patt. cast on 6 (6-7) sts. at the end of next row 14 (12-14) times.

Cast on 0 (9-0) sts. at the end of next row 0 (2-0) times.

There are now 217 (231-247) sts. on needle.

Work in patt. without further inc. until work measures 5 (5¼-5½) in. from last inc. row, i.e. 45 (47-49) rows.

Top of Sleeves and Shoulder Shaping: Cast off 13 (13-15) sts. at the beg. of the next 10 (8-8) rows. Cast off 12 (14-14) sts. at the beg. of the next 4 (6-6) rows.

Change to No. 12 needles and work in k 1, p 1 rib over the rem. 39 (43-43) sts. for 2in. Cast off in rib.

LEFT FRONT

Commencing at lower edge with white wool and No. 10 needles, cast on 67 (71-75) sts.

Work in st-st. commencing at B (B-A) thus:—

Follow chart until C is reached, then rep. from A to C twice more.

Sleeve Shaping: Cont. in patt. casting on 6 (6-7) sts. at end of next purl row 7 (6-7) times, then 0 (9-0) sts. 0 (1-0) times.

There are now 109 (116-124) sts.

Work without further inc. until work measures 4 (4-4¼) in. from last inc. row ending at front edge, i.e. 37 (37-39) rows.

Neck Shaping: Cast off 2 sts. at the beg. of next row, then cast off 2 sts. at the same edge on every alt. row following 10 (11-11) times in all, and at the same time when work measures 5 (5¼-5½) in. from last inc. row ending at side edge, shape top of sleeve and shoulder as follows:—

Cast off 13 (13-15) sts. at the beginning of next row and at same edge 5 (4-4) times in all.

Cast off 12 (14-14) sts. at same edge 2 (3-3) times.

RIGHT FRONT

Work to correspond with left front, reversing shapings and chart.

BANDS

Back: With right side of work facing and using No. 12 needles and white wool, pick up and knit along lower edge of back 133 (141-149) sts. Work in k 1, p 1 rib for 2in. Cast off in rib.

Right Front: With right side of work facing and using No. 12 needles and white wool, pick up and knit along lower edge 67 (71-75) sts., k 4 more times in last st. (front edge). Pick up and knit along front edge to neck 134 (134-134) sts., k 4 more times in last st. (corner of neck), pick up and knit along neck shaping 30 (33-33) sts.

There are now 239 (246-250) sts. on needle.

Work in k 1, p 1 rib for 2in. Cast off in rib.

Left Front: Work to correspond with right front.

Join shoulder and top of sleeve seam.

CUFFS

With right side of work facing and using No. 12 needles and white wool, pick up and knit around cuff edge 76 (80-84) sts. Work in k 1, p 1 rib for 2in. Cast off in rib.

TO MAKE UP

Press all parts under a damp cloth. Join side and underarm seams. Fold all bands in half and sew cast off edges along first row of ribbing on wrong side.

The knitting design on this page has been made available exclusively to us by "Good Housekeeping."

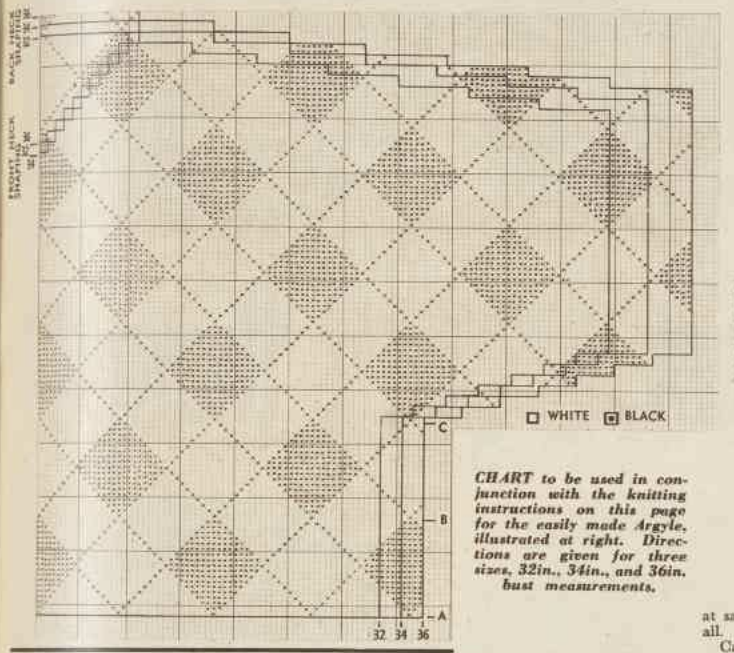


CHART to be used in conjunction with the knitting instructions on this page for the easily made Argyle, illustrated at right. Directions are given for three sizes, 32in., 34in., and 36in. bust measurements.



A NEW SLIP-ON JACKET with bracelet-length sleeves, the Argyle, which is making fashion history in the United States.

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Streamlined country home in Holland



INTERIOR of the covered entry and outdoor living-room of the new streamlined Dutch house. Corner windows serve the library. A creeper has started to climb the slatted wall.



BACK VIEW of house from road, showing garage and main entry. The porthole window lights the staircase and clerestory windows light the passageway and bathrooms above.



FRONT VIEW of the house. Glass doors from the bedrooms lead on to the balcony, and wide glass doors below open into the living and dining rooms.

Situated on a long, narrow piece of land in the pine-tree belt at Halem, Holland, this country home, built for a family of five, has many features of interest to Australian homemakers.

THE back of the house is close to the road and the front faces the sun.

The house was designed by noted architect S. Kompter, of Amsterdam.

Curved roof of the garage and porch (seen in the picture above) breaks the square line of the house in a most attractive way.

The porch also provides an outdoor living area.

The entrance door opens into a wide, tiled hall with a cloakroom at one end and a smartly styled staircase running from the centre to the bedrooms and bathrooms above.

Beneath the curving staircase a door opens into the library, and on the opposite side to the entrance sliding doors open to the combined living and dining room and adjoining kitchen.

The dining area can be separated from the living area when desired by simply pulling a cord which controls an accordion-like "wall" of plastic material that runs on a curving "railway track" set in the ceiling.

Wide picture windows overlook the lawns and gardens, and doors open from the living rooms on to the front and side terraces and lawns.

All the upstairs bedrooms open on to a balcony, protected by the wide roof overhang. Clerestory windows at the rear of the house provide light and air for the upper floor passage-way and bathrooms, also to bedrooms, which run from the front to the back of the house.

Several of the rooms, including the living and dining areas, are flush-panelled in white ash, its pale beauty highlighted by the delicate etchings of the natural wood grain.

The furniture, with the exception of a few heirloom pieces, is streamlined in keeping with the design of the house.

—Eve Gye



CORNER OF THE LIBRARY showing the built-in desk facing the picture window. Notice the modern design of the chair and the upholstered settee in the corner.



THE HALL photographed from the entrance door. At left, doors open into the combined living and dining room. The design of the modern staircase is interesting and space saving.



DINING AREA has an uncluttered air with its simple, modern furniture. The prettily patterned covers to the cushioned modern chairs add vivacity to the color scheme.



VIEW OF THE LIVING-ROOM with dining area in the distance. The accordion-like "wall" can be opened or closed at will. It runs on a track set in the ceiling for the purpose.

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Easy does it...

with safe 'n' sure WHITE WINGS

Quick 'n' thrifty Easter Treat



from

Florence Soutar

(WHITE WINGS COOKING EXPERT)

EASTER wouldn't be Easter—would it?—without some festive fare to thrill your family and welcome your guests. Extra hours in the kitchen? Not necessarily! Here's a party-pretty dish you can run up in no time, without overworking yourself or your budget. Try it—you'll love it!

Minus the icing eggs, this chocolate cake recipe will be a thrifty favourite the year round. It's moist and rich-tasting, and it's prepared specially to match the finely balanced ingredients in White Wings Self Raising Flour. So don't risk missing perfection . . . use only White Wings, the sure, pure Cream of Tartar Flour that brings up all the lovely natural flavours . . . and intrudes no edgy "after-taste."

Here's a tip—double the mixture and have *two* cakes for the work of one! No need to fret about freshness. Cakes made with White Wings keep beautifully, thanks to the Cream of Tartar it contains. White Wings Cream of Tartar Flour gives cakes a uniformly fine, even texture, keeps them fresh, moist and tempting day in, day out!



Cream of Tartar, made from pure grape juice and rich in essential potassium, is the world's oldest, most tested and proved rising ingredient. And White Wings, containing Cream of Tartar, is the oldest-established, most respected brand of self raising flour.

Nice to know *that White Wings comes to you clean and pure . . . untouched by human hands. As another safeguard, White Wings is double-packed and double-sealed, undergoes a double Entoletion process that guarantees absolute purity!*

Any cooking queries? Mrs. Soutar will be happy to help you. Call in and see her, or write c/o White Wings Auditorium, 8th Floor, Mareus Clark's, Central Square, Sydney. Or 'phone M 4101—Extension 27.



Popular White Wings cooking demonstrations are conducted every day by Mrs. Soutar at the above address. Pop in next time you're in town. Time: 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Monday to Friday. No need to book—extra seating has been provided for Mrs. Soutar's ever-growing audiences. No charge, of course—and there are prizes for lucky seat holders.

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SECTION 6

WHITE WINGS CHOCOLATE EASTER EGG CAKE

- *4 ozs. Butter (or Margarine)* • *4 ozs. Sugar* • *10 ozs. White Wings Cream of Tartar Self Raising Flour* • *3 level tblsps. Cocoa* • *1 level tsp. Cinnamon* • *1 level tsp. Carb. Soda* • *½ tsp. Salt* • *3 level tblsps. Golden Syrup* • *½ cup Milk* • *1 tblsp. Vinegar* • *1 Egg.*

METHOD: Cream butter and sugar, add golden syrup, then vinegar. Sift dry ingredients together 3 times. Add alternately with milk to creamed mixture. Lastly add well-beaten egg. Bake in 8" greased cake pan for 45-50 mins., mod. oven. When cold, ice with chocolate icing and decorate with shredded cocoanut. Finish with tiny Easter eggs made from icing coloured with White Wings pure vegetable colourings.

CUT OUT—PASTE ON CARD—KEEP IN RECIPE FILE





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Easter Dinner

Crown roast of lamb is an impressive dish for the main course of an Easter dinner.



AN EASTER DINNER you will want to serve—French broth, green darioles of tongue, seasoned crown roast of lamb, pineapple fantasy. See recipes on this page.

BY OUR FOOD AND COOKERY EXPERTS

LIKE the other courses of the menu given here, crown roast is easy to prepare, and although the ingredients are everyday fare the effect is festive.

To lessen the amount of work to be done on Easter morning the broth and the pineapple sweet may be prepared the day before.

It is not wise to place pineapple in the refrigerator or ice-chest overnight, as it has a strong flavor which may permeate other foods.

Chill for an hour before serving so that the dish is quite cold when eaten.

French broth is actually improved by being made the day before, because as it cools after cooking the surplus fat sets on the top and may be removed before the broth is reheated.

Green darioles of tongue are best eaten freshly made, but time is saved if the tongues are cooked and skinned the day before.

All spoon measurements in the following recipes are level.

MENU

French broth.

Green darioles of tongue.

Seasoned crown roast of lamb.

Green peas, baked potatoes, baked pumpkin.

Pineapple fantasy.

Coffee.

FRENCH BROTH

One large piece of shin of beef, 1 mutton shank, 3 pints water, 3 teaspoons salt, 2 tablespoons washed barley, 1 teaspoon meat or vegetable extract, 1 chopped carrot, 1 chopped onion, 1 small chopped swede, 2 sticks chopped celery, chopped parsley.

Mince the shin of beef, place in large saucepan with mutton shank, washed and gashed. Add all ingredients except chopped parsley. Cover closely and cook gently 2½ to 3 hours, adding a little more liquid if necessary. Or the soup may be pressure-cooked 20 minutes. Serve in little pottery bowls or bouillon cups, sprinkled with chopped parsley.

GREEN DARIOLES OF TONGUE

Six small cabbage leaves, boiling water, 4 or 5 cooked sheep's tongues, ¼ pint medium thickness white sauce, ½ cup soft, white breadcrumbs, salt, pinch cayenne pepper, ½ teaspoon mixed mustard, ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce, 1 dessertspoon grated onion, 3 olives, parsley to garnish.

Wash cabbage leaves thoroughly, remove portion of coarse centre stem. Pour boiling water over, soak until soft. Skin and trim cooked tongues while still hot, dice finely. Mix with white sauce, breadcrumbs, salt, cayenne pepper, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and onion. Allow to stand for 10 minutes. Grease small moulds, line with cabbage leaves, patted dry with clean tea-towel. Fill lined moulds with tongue mixture. Cover with greased paper, stand in slab-tin with about ½in. boiling water. Steam in moderate oven approximately 20 minutes. Turn out carefully on to hot serving-dish, or individual serving-plates, top with half an olive. Garnish with parsley, serve hot, with rolled bread and butter or Melba toast.

SEASONED CROWN ROAST OF LAMB

Two loins of lamb, salt, pepper, flour, 2 tablespoons butter or substitute, ½lb. mushrooms (may be omitted and onion increased to 2 tablespoons), 1 tablespoon finely chopped onion, pinch grated lemon rind, pinch nutmeg, 1 dessertspoon chopped parsley, 2½ to 3 cups soft breadcrumbs, 2 rashers bacon.

Have crown roast prepared by butcher. Ends of bones are trimmed as for cutlets, loins are placed upright with fat inside. After being secured at each end the two loins are pressed into a circular shape, still with fat on the inside, and trimmed bones at top. Dust with salt and pepper, rub lighly inside and out with flour. Place in baking-dish with small quantity of hot fat. Prepare seasoning. Melt butter or substitute, add peeled chopped mushrooms and onion. Saute five minutes. Mix with lemon rind, nutmeg, parsley, and breadcrumbs. Season with salt and pepper, add 1 rasher finely chopped bacon. Mix well. Fill into centre of crown roast. Bake in moderate oven 1½ to 2 hours, according to thickness of meat. Remove rind from remaining bacon rasher, cut into three pieces, place on top of seasoning, and continue cooking until bacon is done. Lift on to hot serving-dish, arrange cutlet frills (if available) on ends of bones. Carve by cutting downwards between the chops, serving a portion of seasoning with each chop.

PINEAPPLE FANTASY

One medium-sized pineapple, 1 cup sugar, 2 eggs, pinch salt, ¼ teaspoon grated lemon rind, 1½ teaspoons gelatine softened in ¼ cup hot water, nuts or crystallised pineapple (or both) to decorate.

Cut pineapple in halves lengthwise, leaving stalk on. With a large fork scrape out all pulp and place in saucepan with ½ cup of the sugar. Simmer gently 10 minutes. Strain syrup into a basin, keeping ½ cup of syrup and 1 cup of the shredded pineapple to use in the mixture. Place the ½ cup of syrup into a saucepan with half the remaining sugar, 2 egg-yolks, salt, and lemon rind. Stir over boiling water for 10 minutes. Add softened gelatine, stir until dissolved. Stir while cooling over bowl of ice. Fold in cooked pineapple and egg-whites beaten to meringue consistency with remaining sugar. Continue beating until very thick. Fill into one-half of the pineapple, decorate with crystallised pineapple or nuts. Chill until set. Serve with cream.

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LUNCH PROBLEM SOLVED BY



Imperial
CAMP PIE



"What will I give the children for lunch?"
The answer to that daily question is . . . tasty, nourishing Imperial Camp Pie! As a cold meat sandwich it's great . . . blended as a sandwich filling it's delicious! Keep several cans always on hand to meet any sudden demand . . . it's a great standby, and the kiddies love it.

TRY THIS APPETISING SANDWICH FILLING

Ingredients:—Half of a 12 oz. can of Imperial Camp Pie; 1 finely chopped Gherkin; 1 dessertspoon Worcester Sauce; 1 pinch Mustard.

Method:—Blend ingredients into a smooth mixture. This is sufficient for eight sandwiches (16 bread rounds). Also makes a very good savoury base and can be topped with Almonds, Capers, Olives, etc.

The other half of the can of Imperial Camp Pie will make an ideal lunch for Mother, or may be used in many other ways.

Ask your grocer for
Imperial
CAMP PIE

A 39.10.2



VENCATACHELLUM
Genuine Madras
CURRY POWDER
The Same Grand Curry Grandma used

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL RECIPE
MULLIGATAWNY SOUP

1 onion, 1 apple, 1 tbsp. butter or clarified fat, 1 tbsp. each of flour, curry powder, chutney, and desiccated coconut, 1 tbsp. sugar, juice of ½ lemon, 6 cups rich strained stock, salt, cayenne.

Peel and finely chop the onion and fry in heated butter in large saucepan till brown. Stir in flour and curry powder, cook slowly till dark brown, then add chutney, coconut, strained lemon juice, and stock. And stir till boiling. Cover with lid, simmer for ½ hour, then rub through sieve or colander, re-heat in saucepan, season as required, and serve hot with boiled rice, garnished with sliced lemon.

JUST ASK FOR "VENTS"

Tested recipes win prizes



CHEESE SAVORY SQUARES are tempting for breakfast or luncheon. They are quick to prepare, rich in flavor, and very satisfying. See consolation prize-winning recipe.



A NOVEL SWEDISH idea for table decoration on Easter morning. Place a square of grass from the garden on a small tray and arrange the eggs on top of it.

• An appetising casserole for dinner made of smoked fish, tomatoes, and potatoes, with a sizzling brown cheese topping, wins the main prize of £5 in this week's contest.

CONSOLATION prizes are awarded to a delicious chilled fruit layer sweet, a savory cheese breakfast dish, and a simple method of crystallising figs.

The chilled fruit layer sweet is made in one large or two small refrigerator trays. Any fruit pulp, sweetened to taste, may be substituted for the apricot pulp suggested in the recipe. Toasted coconut, chopped cherries, or chopped jelly may be used for topping.

Crystallised figs make a delightful addition to cakes, puddings, and cookies. Be budget-conscious and prepare some while the fresh fruit is available.

All spoon measurements are level.

SMOKED COD AU GRATIN

One pound smoked cod fillets or haddock, 2 medium-sized potatoes (boiled and sliced), 1 teaspoon salt, pinch pepper, 1¼ cups skinned cooked tomatoes, 1 dessertspoon melted butter or substitute, 2 tablespoons milk, 3 or 4 tablespoons grated cheese, chopped parsley.

Cut fish into service-sized pieces, cover with cold water, bring to the boil, drain. Cover with fresh water, bring to the boil, simmer until tender. Drain, remove skin. Line greased ovenware dish with potatoes, season with salt and pepper. Place tomato pulp at both ends, fill centre with fish. Mix melted shortening with milk, pour over potatoes. Top with grated cheese, bake in moderate oven 20 to 25 minutes. Sprinkle with chopped parsley, serve hot.

First Prize of £5 to Mrs. B. Bell, 14 Birdwood St., Mentone, Vic.

CHILLED FRUIT LAYER SWEET

One 7in. layer of plain sponge or light butter cake, 2 cups (1 small tin) apricot pulp, sugar, 1 egg, extra ¾ cup sugar, vanilla, ½ pint cream.

Arrange a layer of cake-fingers in one large refrigerator tray or two small trays. Cover with apricot pulp sweetened to taste. Beat egg, add extra sugar and vanilla. Continue beating until thick, fold in whipped cream, and spread over apricot pulp. Freeze until firm. Serve cut into slices and decorated with chopped toasted almonds.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. A. E. Jensen, 586 Norway St., Kelburn, Wellington, New Zealand.

CRYSTALLISED FIGS

Six pounds firm figs, 6lb. sugar, 2½ cups water, 3 tablespoons white vinegar.

Wash and dry figs, remove stalks, prick well with sharp fork or skewer. Bring water, vinegar, and sugar slowly to boiling point. Boil 3 or 4 minutes, add figs, simmer 3 hours. Drain. Place figs on cake-cooler, allow to dry in the open air, lightly covered and only in mild sunlight. Turn each day. When quite dry, roll in castor sugar, wrap in waxed paper.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. W. T. Broome, 145 Prince's Highway, St. Peters, N.S.W.

CHEESE SAVORY SQUARES

One-and-a-half cups grated cheese, 1 teaspoon butter or substitute, 1 teaspoon mixed mustard, 2 tablespoons vinegar, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 egg, 3 or 4 slices toast, 3 or 4 thick slices lightly fried tomato.

Combine all ingredients except toast and tomato. Heat over boiling water until smooth and thick. Place a tomato slice on each toast slice, spoon cheese mixture over. Serve hot garnished with parsley.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. D. Swan, Cosy Dell, Paul St., Brighton, Sandgate, Qld.

Sandwich holder for outdoor use



SHAPED to hold biscuits or sandwiches, this light wooden holder is easy to make and a grand asset to picnic and barbecue equipment.

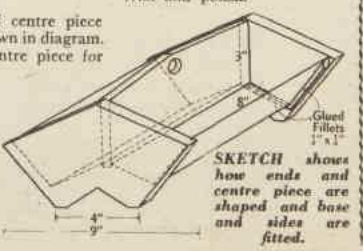


Match up your wooden accessories with this easily made sandwich and biscuit holder for terrace, barbecue, and picnic use.

MADE from plywood, the holder is divided in the centre and the base and the sides are angled so that the two compartments are shaped to hold sandwiches or crackers firmly in place.

You need 2 pieces ¼in. plywood, 9in. x 5in., for ends, 1 piece ¼in. plywood, 8in. x 3¼in., for centre piece, 4 pieces 3-16th in. plywood, 8in. x 3in., for sides and base of trough, 1in. panel pins, glue, approximately 2ft. ¼in. x ¼in. wood fillet.

Cut ends and centre piece and shape as shown in diagram. Bore hole in centre piece for carrying purposes, then nail to ends. Glue four 3in. strips of fillet to the inside edges of end pieces, then glue four 2¾in. strips of fillet at right angles to these strips and sloping towards the centre board. This forms a V-shape support for base and sides of trough. When fillet is firm, glue in base and side pieces. Wax and polish.



SKETCH shows how ends and centre piece are shaped and base and sides are fitted.

Baby's crying

IN the early days of its life, crying is a baby's only language.

Crying is the only way a baby can let you know it wants food, a drink, or to be made more comfortable.

A moderate amount of crying is healthy and is good exercise for the child's body, and especially for the expansion of the lungs.

However, you should always seek the reason for any crying, and when the cause has been discovered and removed the crying should stop.

A baby cries in a different way for each different want. There are several types of crying with which you should become familiar and recognise.

There is the hunger cry, the fretful cry when a baby is tired or uncomfortable, the cry of pain when something is hurting, the sick cry, which is usually low and moaning, and the spoilt cry, which stops as soon as the baby is picked up.

Recognising the character of your baby's cries will save a lot of worry.

A chapter dealing with this subject and with other aspects of a baby's mental health can be found in the book of complete parentcraft "You and Your Baby," by Sister Mary Jacob, A.T.N.A.

The book can be obtained from our Mothercraft Service Bureau, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney, or from bookshops in all capital cities. Price, 8/6. Postage, 9d. extra.

National Library of Australia http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4382306

The Curious Crime

By A. E. MARTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY LASKIE



FOLLOWING the sudden death of one of the jury, DAVID CURTIS awaits a second trial for the murder of his wealthy AUNT MALY. Evidence, substantiated by his cousins, FRANKLYN GREENE and CYNTHIA WARREN, is strong against him, but David, psychologically unbalanced, keeps withdrawing from reality.

He has imaginary meetings with CLAUDINE, whom he loved, while the main evidence against him is his conversation with an imaginary companion, PETER.

To Franklyn's chagrin, the reading of his aunt's will reveals that she has disinherited him, leaving the bulk of her large fortune to Cynthia. He plans to make good his loss by marrying Cynthia, but fails through his association with his aunt's former maid, CELESTE.

Meanwhile, a childhood friend, MELITA WINSOR, believes in David and, with DR. ELLERSHAW and DR. GROSTOCK, is working to clear him.

She makes friends with Celeste, and the two are now sharing an apartment. NOW READ ON.

David

WHEN I was told that three weeks had elapsed since my trial I was astonished. I had few visitors, and there was absolutely nothing to do, but no one was seeking to remind me of that which I wanted to forget, and I felt the rest was doing me good.

Dr. Grostock was always very decent. One day he brought me a landscape painting Ellershaw had asked him to show me—a Gravellini and a gem. Only about eight by ten and not the sort of thing for all tastes. I exclaimed at its beauty, and Grostock said he'd leave it with me, and Ellershaw could pick it up later.

When he came we had quite a chat about it. He inquired if I'd discussed the picture with Peter, and it came as a shock to me that I had not given him a thought for ages. He asked me would I mind keeping the painting, as it was inconvenient for him to take it just then, and naturally I was delighted.

Melita came in almost as soon as he had gone and spotted the Gravellini at once. "Oh, David, how lovely!" she exclaimed in exactly the impulsive manner of Claudine.

The scandal sheets had torn Gravellini's character to shreds, but they couldn't make anything he painted less lovely. I told Melita, "Claudine says anyone who paints anything beautiful can get into Heaven without any other references."

Melita laughed. She doesn't laugh much, but it is quite musical. She should laugh more. She said, "Then I'm sure, Davy, one day you'll find St. Peter tipping his halo to you." After that I found myself warming to her.

Recently a surprising thing happened. Claudine swung into the cockney she affects in moments of crisis and said, "Well, I'll be 'opping, cull. That sheila of yours will be ducking in any moment nah," and faded with a knowing wink that took the sting out of farewell.

And the next time I stared at the wall, watching the shimmer that always preceded her coming, no features formed, but plainly I heard the echo of a whisper, "She'll be a lovely, lovely girl, Davy." The door behind me clicked and Dr. Grostock was in the cell saying, "Good morning, David. I've brought a lovely, lovely girl to see you."

He left Melita and me alone and we sat side by side. I gazed at her for a long time, and there came a mistiness to her eyes that made them rather sweet. She is a very pretty girl when

Hurrying to the stairs, Celeste was just in time to see Franklyn streaking for the front door.

Our dramatic two-part novel Part Two

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

you notice. I said, "I never kissed Claudine."

"No?" she said. It was a very small voice.

"Never once," I said.

She said nothing, but her eyes never wavered. I closed my eyes, but no Claudine came. There was only Melita. It was strange that I didn't resent that. When I opened my eyes she broke the long silence.

"Would you kiss me, David?"

Her lips were warm like her body when I put my arms about her, and there came, surprisingly from the far years, the memory of my mother, and I put my head on Melita's breast and felt for the soft caress of her hand on my hair.

I began to tell her. "When I met Claudine I didn't know she was married. It wouldn't have mattered anyhow. We couldn't have helped ourselves."

"I understand, David," Melita murmured.

"It was very lovely — being silly together. Making up ridiculous casts for impossible plays—Anna Conda, a snake in the grass. Substituting words in song titles. Loathsome for lonesome and swine for pine. Is that difficult for you to understand, Melita?"

"No," she said.

"We used to meet at a small out-of-the-way cafe until one day someone she knew came in —some woman. I didn't see her, but Claudine was perturbed. It was then she told me about her husband.

"He was the sort of man I don't understand any more, I suppose, than that sort of man understands me. Making money was the only thing he could do except drive a car and fly a plane. Claudine told me this without bitterness, and I asked her how she came to marry him.

"She said: 'You know sumpun, Phineas?'—that was one of her foolish names for me— 'I think he made a monkey out of me. He planned his wooing as he'd plan a business transaction. He learned what flowers I favored, the colors I liked, the authors I read. He tricked me into believing we had something in common, but I hadn't been married a day before I suspected he was a fraud. It was a rush proposal, a rush engagement, and a rush wedding. He didn't give me time to find him out, Phineas.'

"After the woman saw us in the cafe we used to meet at my studio. I gave her a key in case Walter, who cleaned up, was not there. I began painting her portrait. And then, one day, she told me she would not be coming any more. When she had left the studio the day previously, the woman she had seen in the cafe had been waiting on the kerb. 'She had been watching, David,' Claudine said. 'I knew by the look on her face before she turned away.'

"I wanted Claudine to tell her husband about me. We had nothing to hide. And then, Melita, she said, 'Nothing now — nothing yet,' and I said. 'Claudine . . . you're not coming back because I'm in love with you.' You must believe me, Melita. Till then I hadn't thought of it that way and then, somehow, suddenly I realised it must be so.

"'That's one reason,' Claudine said. 'And you're not in love with me?' I asked. 'No, David,' she said. 'I don't think so. You've given me something I needed, but time does some funny things with one's heart, and I'm afraid.'

"I pleaded, but I couldn't move her. She said she would disturb me, and I had a career to take care of. When she rose to go she said, 'Don't let us say any good-byes. I will be thinking of you every day, David, imagining we're together. Tune in sometimes.'

"Next day I was in my studio, hoping against hope she would change her mind, when the door opened and a man entered. For a moment I thought he was drunk. He looked about the room, over the books and pictures and the ragged settee and the easel on which was the portrait of Claudine.

"When he spoke his voice was harsh, mechanical. 'I've brought back the key of the studio,' he said. 'Claudine will not be using it any more.' I knew then that he was Clanmorgan. He tossed the key on the ground in front of me and began fumbling in his vest pocket and brought out another key. He said, 'I am going away, Curtis. This is the key of my —of Claudine's home. Take it.'

"It angered me that he made no explanation nor accusation. 'Claudine needs you,' he went on, still extending the key. 'You will find her waiting for you to-night at eight. Not earlier or later. The servants will be away so you will have to let yourself in. Her sitting-room is upstairs—the last on the right.'

"When I did not move he said, 'Come. She said you never disappointed her. You won't fail her now?' I took the key, and he went on in that same harsh voice, 'I am leaving in my plane. I will never come back.' He said over his shoulder, 'Remember, at eight. She will be waiting. If you listen you will hear my plane leave.'

"After he'd gone I sat for a long time. I had never realised I was so young, Melita. But he had said Claudine expected me—that I had never failed her and so, a few minutes before eight, I was outside her home. It was a two-storied house set back from the street. There was a glow from a single-front window, and a street lamp cast a pale ray upon the verandah. There was a welcome vase. I caught the fragrance of the flowers as I opened the front door with the key he had left with me and stepped into the vestibule.

"The only light was on the newel, and it seemed to bathe the ascent in a beckoning glow. I went slowly up. I could, faintly, hear music. The passage on the upper floor was almost dark, but a streak of light ran perpendicularly and guided me to Claudine's sitting-room. It was from this room the music was coming. I knocked gently but there was no answer. I pushed the door.

"She was lying on a couch, a red scarf hiding her face and shielding it from the glare of the hanging centre light. On a table beside her was a radio. The volume control had been turned low but a voice came clearly, some man singing — 'Celia, I want to steal-ya.'

"I thought she had fallen asleep and sat on the edge of the couch beside her, fearful of waking her abruptly. A clock began to chime. 'Claudine,' I whispered, and again, 'Claudine.' I put out my hand and touched her hair and as I did so heard the zoom of an aeroplane. It must have passed right over the house, but she didn't move.

"The plane soared off but came back, this time no more than roof high and I ran to the window and raised the sash. I heard excited shouts from the street and, as the drone of the plane faded, the man on the radio still singing 'Celia.'

"I called, 'Claudine,' sure that she would be sitting up, but she hadn't stirred, and then the plane approached once more as if it were diving from a great height at awful speed and from directly overhead. A thunder of sound filled the room, but even before the dreadful crash came I knew. I sank on my knees beside the couch and forced myself to take her hand.

"It was like ice, and I began to sob, and some shuddering movement dislodged the scarf and it fell to the carpet. And there was no lovely face, Melita . . . nothing but bruises and scars, and shattered bones . . ."

★ ★ ★

Melita

I held David close during his terrible recital.

"Oh, my dear, that wasn't Claudine you saw in that room," I told him now, my cheek against his. "Claudine is the woman you laugh with. The lovely woman who comes to you in spite of everything—who will continue to come."

The pause seemed lasting for ever. "Claudine will never come again," he said at last, but with neither bitterness nor despair. He took my hand and went on. "Let me tell you something strange, Melita. I was waiting for her to come. It always began with a light on the white wall, so faint I am sure none but I would see it, and then slowly her face would form—I was waiting but no light came—only a whispering, and then the door behind me opened, and you were in the room, and the queer part is that I was not angered. I wanted you." He said it as if I, too, would find it incredible.

WHEN I told Dr. Ellershaw that David had broken through his imprisoning silence he was more than interested. He asked if David had spoken of Peter.

"Not a word."

"Good," he said. "He didn't need Peter when he had Claudine. He won't need Claudine now that he has you. You must see him as often as possible." He smiled. "I fancy you will not find that arduous."

After a few thoughtful moments he said, "You know, Miss Winsor, my most satisfying impression after my talks with David is his utter lack of guilt consciousness. I have felt that, whenever he spoke of Peter in relation to Mrs. Glass' death, the thoughts he was expressing had been suggested to his mind by others." From his wallet he drew a sheet of paper. "It is a discarded page from a letter David had been scribbling to Mrs. Clanmorgan."

The writing began at the top of the page:

"just like the trial in Alice. People shouting 'Off with his head' and a woman in the jury looking like the Duchess' cook. How strange to think all this nonsense began with the cook . . ."

At this point it broke off as though David had been dissatisfied with what he had set down. I looked at Dr. Ellershaw. "Mrs. Glass' cook gave evidence at the trial. Why, Doctor, don't you see? "It all began with the cook . . ." What began? The events leading up to the trial . . ."

I was in a hopeful mood. "Remember the evidence that Cynthia gave, Doctor, the inference that Davy and his aunt had quarrelled? Couldn't it have been because of something the cook told Mrs. Glass, and couldn't that have had something to do with Mrs. Clanmorgan!"

He smiled at my eagerness. "David's all right," he said.

I knew that but I wanted more. I wanted David's name cleared and a David free to walk down a church aisle with a bride wearing his mother's pendant. I smiled at my folly. Probably there was no longer any pendant, but, somehow, the recollection of the lovely thing and the lovely woman it had adorned made me square my shoulders as I left the doctor's rooms and hurried to the Golquin, where Celeste had proposed we should lunch in her apartment.

I had found a part-time job in the dental surgery of a Dr. Sureby. Celeste had been less fortunate, though she did not appear to have tried very hard. In the three weeks I had lived alongside her she had spoken only desultorily of the past, and I had come to the conclusion that either she had nothing to impart or she was not yet convinced I was one to be confided in.

Considering that no wages were coming in she was treating herself well regarding wardrobe and was forever buying gadgets to make housekeeping easier. When I got in, she told me to throw my hat on her bed while she served up.

I made her laugh with a description of Dr. Sureby, who reminded me of a fox, and of an old lady who horrified him by slapping a ten-pound note on his tray. "Take a squint at that," she said, and, picking it up, tore it in halves and slapped one half back. "Now get to work," she said, "and, if you don't hurt me you can have the other half."

Celeste looked up, surprised. "Why, I know who that was, Old Hildegard, the cook at Warriewood. She told me about it."

"But, Celeste, a cook paying ten pounds for an extraction!"

"I told her she must have more money than sense, and she said 'I bain also got toothache!'"

I'd have been no more than mildly interested had it not been for the scrap of David's letter to Claudine. But, here again, the cook was highlighted. I knew the charge for a tooth extraction and I could not conceive anyone willingly paying such a fantastic sum as ten pounds unless . . . unless what? Unless she had more money than she needed. Much more money. And why should Mrs. Glass' cook have money to throw away?

When we had finished the dishes we went into the living-room, where the sun streamed across a photograph on the mantel, reminding us it was a lovely day. "Poor old mum," Celeste said. "She gets more sun here than she got in real life."

I lifted the photo and said something complimentary which pleased her, and, putting the picture back, said, "Don't forget your key's here." I held it up.

Celeste said, "That's not the apartment key, innocent. That's none other than the key to the murder house. I never gave it up. Why? 'Cause nobody axed me. Everyone was so anxious to get out of Warriewood, little things like keys were forgotten." She gave me a challenging glance. "I could show you ever. Even the spot marked X."

"Warriewood?" I gasped. "But what if Miss Warren . . . ?"

"Cynthia closed the house after the funeral," she said. "Besides, she'd as soon walk through a dark graveyard. Are you scared?"

"Of course not. It would be a thrill."

"Well, what are we waiting for?" She began fussing at the mirror and said, "What's the idea not wearing your ring?"

An idea came. As long as she trusted me anything might happen at Warriewood. I said, "If you like you can wear it."

She seemed genuinely delighted, and, when I had brought it in from the adjoining apartment, I put it on her finger. "You've got all the luck," she said.

On the verandah of Warriewood her eyes became impishly speculative. "We'll knock just in case," she said. "If anyone answers I'll cook up an excuse." She beat an authoritative tattoo with the brass knocker, giggled, and waited. When no response came she put the key in the lock and swung the door open. "No one home but the old lady's ghost," she said.

After the brittle brightness of the Golquin apartment the first glimpse of the interior was depressing. Celeste sniffed. "Even without a murder it would give you the creeps."

She had assumed the role of professional guide. "On your right, folks, the di-minutive parlor once used by the widowed deceased and through the window of which the murderer leapt into the shrub-bubbery. On your left you will perceive a staircase on the 'eights of which is the attic room in which slumbered the captivating Celeste.

"'Alfway up to said attic are rooms hoccupied by the heiress, Cynthia Warren, the disin'erited Franklyn Greene, and 'Ildegard the cook. Follow me, hif you please!"

It did not seem the time or place to joke, but I managed a smile. We went straight to her room. It was smallish with a three-quarter iron bedstead and a hard chair set before an old-type cedar dressing-table.

Celeste ran a tentative finger over its surface, leaving a track in the thin dust. She had pulled off a glove and began to pat the handkerchief in her coat pocket, fluttering the finger circled by my ring, watching the effect in the mirror.

"Curtis' room's next door," she explained. "Go in and have a penn'orth of gloat. I'm going through these drawers again to make sure I didn't leave any tiaras behind."

Outside David's room I paused to capture a picture. Franklyn Greene standing there on the night of the murder, listening to David say, "Don't you see, Davy, we've got to use the slip-knot?"

I thought of David in the dock, interjecting brightly, "Go on, Franklyn, tell them about Hobbs and the cat," for all the world as though he were prompting his cousin to relate some entertaining incident.

I wanted to believe that that was all it was. An incident dragged from David's childhood.

I entered David's room, Celeste following.

"See that hook over the basket?" she said. "That's where the fatal cord hung. I often wondered what it was for. The morning before the old lady got hers I must have given the cord a knock with my head. It fell into the basket while I was collecting the soiled clothes for the laundry. I found it when I was sorting out in the kitchen. Old Hildegard said, 'Whatever's that?' and I showed her and Cynthia how you could pull one end and tighten the knot. I even put it round my neck and gurgled."

"It makes my blood run cold to think of it," I said.

"Pooh! That's only because of what came after. Now, what say we brace ourselves with tea before taking a squint at the death chamber?"

The visit had been worth while. At least I knew that the cord had been taken from David's room and that two women, in addition to Celeste, knew about it. And wasn't it reasonable to suppose that Franklyn had seen it in David's room? Clutching at straws, I assured myself it was significant that only a few hours before an actual strangling Celeste had pantomimed one.

I wanted to ask Celeste if, after finding the cord when sorting the soiled linen in the kitchen, she had returned it to David's room, but I thought it might be exhibiting too deep an interest.

In the cement-floored kitchen we found the gas flowing, and, half filling the kettle, I set it over a jet. Celeste put out cups, saucers, and teapot, and we gossiped till she noticed she had only one glove.

"I must have left it upstairs," she said. "Brew the tea like a love while I run up."

I took down the canister from the shelf above the stove. I dipped in the measure, and while withdrawing it saw a speck of white against the black leaves.

Something had been wrapped in paper and hidden there, and, curiously, I unwrapped the small packet. I was standing with my back to the door, filled with astonishment at the nature of the thing my curiosity had revealed and which now lay in the palm of my hand, when a voice behind me said "Thank you."

A hand covered my mouth. I kicked and bit and managed to get my lips free to shout "Help!" and no more before my arms were grasped above the elbows and I was shot across the kitchen. My head struck the built-in cupboards.

When I was able to sit up I leaned my aching head against the woodwork behind me. In my line of vision under the kitchen table lay a broken ring but there were no frightening feet. The kettle was boiling furiously, and I wondered whether I had been unconscious one minute or ten. But in ten —in five—in three even, Celeste would have had time to get up to the attic and back, and there was no sign or sound of her.

I put up my hand to straighten my hat and found I was grasping the paper in which the thing I had taken from the tea canister had been wrapped. There was writing on it.

"David, dear, it's your 21st birthday, and this pendant is my loving . . ."

I was dizzy, and the writing blurred, and I could read no more but I had seen enough. My eyes focused to a point past my toes and my handbag floated into vision. It was lying beside the table and I climbed to my feet and retrieved it. Steadying myself, I turned off the gas, then, thrusting the paper into my bag, found a broom and, very much frightened, went to look for Celeste.

★ ★ ★

Celeste

A few hours before Mrs. Glass was murdered she had shown me the pendant which David was to have on his twenty-first. She believed I couldn't read English, and, when she asked me to put the pendant in a drawer with the letter, I saw a peek at what David's mother had written.

Once I'd seen the jewels which under her will went to Cynthia. Wide bracelets and long ear-rings, necklets with their love-lockets set with rubies, and big, fringed brooches lit with enough stones to light a palais de danse—all screaming to be reset and worth a pot.

Mrs. Glass sat propped up in bed and goo'd over the pieces, and all I could do was watch with my mouth watering as she dropped them back in the box.

And then I ran into Melita Winsor and her ring. It looked like heaven was at last giving a poor working girl a break when she offered to let me wear the ring while we went on a snoop to Warriewood. On the way I wondered how I could follow up a pinch with a story she'd swallow, but inspiration didn't come till we got to the kitchen.

I kidded I'd left my glove upstairs. My tale would be I'd gone to the washroom and dropped the ring and it had rolled somewhere or gone down the plug. When at last we gave up the searching what could she do? It'd be my carelessness and her bad luck.

When she yelled from the kitchen I knew it was something more than cockroaches, and I rushed to the stairs and looked over and down just in time to see Franklyn Greene streak past on his way to the front door.

I stood working that one out. Nothing happened but silence, then Melita came into view slowly mounting the stairs, broom at the ready, looking like she'd seen Mrs. Glass' ghost.

She called, "Celeste, are you all right? There's been a thief in the house."

That didn't start me yawning. I stepped back, whipped the ring from my finger and stowed it under my stocking, then went to meet her, speaking my piece. "Oh, Melita, how'm I going to

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TWO-PART NOVEL

...ace was gone. I ...ed it with my glove on my ...ssing-table, and when I came ...ack it wasn't there. The man ...must have taken it."

She was no sap. "How do ...you know it was a man?" she ...asked.

"Because I saw him streaking ...past the front door," I told her. "Melita! What happened?"

She said someone had grabbed ...her and snatched a pendant ...she'd found hidden in the tea ...caddy.

"The dirty double-crosser!" ...It was out before I could help ...myself. The morning I'd found Mrs. Glass strangled I hadn't ...disturbed. I noticed the powder ...puff beside the bed and was ...frightened to step closer, but I ...remembered the pendant and ...pulled open the drawer in ...which I'd placed it the previous ...night.

It was still there, resting on ...the letter Curtis' mother had ...written—a secret to all but Mrs. ...Glass and me—and I was ...tempted. But we had murder ...in our hands, and I put Satan ...behind me and went up and ...told Franklyn what had hap...pened.

Standing talking to Melita at ...the top of the stairs I remem...bered what he'd said. "Give me ...a couple of minutes and then ...go up and wake David."

Well—he'd had his couple of ...minutes and they'd been profit...able. He'd gone into the old ...lady's room and when he came ...out locked the door. While the ...inspector was concerning him...self with the cause of death, I'd ...prised open the drawer where ...the pendant should have been, ...and pendant and letter had ...gone. And Franklyn had been ...the only one in the room since ...I found the body!

It was no time to make a ...song and dance about it, but I ...figured at the right moment I ...could properly go to town with ...Franklyn, and, if he was the ...man I believed, he'd be ready ...to share. I hadn't reckoned on ...Cynthia emptying me out.

When I heard that Cynthia ...was closing Warriewood I ...dropped a note under the front ...door where Franklyn would get ...it when he returned from the ...funeral, warning him that a lady ...knew what he'd been up to and ...might have it on her conscience ...so that she'd have to tell the ...police, who would feel it their ...duty to make him turn out his ...pockets.

I said it might be better if ...he left the pretty thing some...where in the house and we could ...have a nice talk about it later.

It came off all right, because, ...under his sun-tan, Franklyn is ...as yellow as a llama. He'd been ...scared to take the pendant away ...but had planted it where he ...could get it when it suited.

I rang him the day following ...the funeral, and he admitted ...he'd told the inspector that he ...hadn't touched anything in Mrs. ...Glass' room but had misunder...stood his question. He thought ...Hack had been referring to the ...body and its immediate neigh...bourhood.

He'd been so upset he'd for...gotten that he'd taken charge ...of the pendant, but, as soon as ...he got my kind note, he'd realise ...a false construction could be ...placed on his action, and he and ...the policeman had had a chat ...about it. The policeman had ...handed the pendant over to the ...lawyer for the estate, and all ...was now well and thank you ...very much.

He made it sound so plausible ...that like a sap I believed him.

When Melita spilled the news ...that I'd been double-crossed I ...was too mad to heed what I ...said. A lying hound was one ...of the more delicate expressions ...I used in relation to Master F.

"If you know who he is we ...should go after him," she said.

I pulled myself together."Now wait a moment," I ...warned. "We can't do that. ...Don't you see what could hap...pen? He'd laugh and tell us to ...raise headquarters."

"What's wrong with that?" ...she asked at once.

"Ask yourself. Whose house ...is this? Who invited us here? ...He could say he'd caught you ...pinching the pendant."

"But it's ridiculous," she said.

"You tell that to a judge." I ...put a pleading hand on her arm. ..."Listen, kid. The coppers might ...give you the benefit of the ...doubt, but me—I'm on proba...tion. It was bad enough when ...they found me kidding I was ...foreign. Give me a break."

It worked. She said, "I don't ...want to get you in a jam, ...Celeste, but my ring had more ...than money value. If you ...recognised the man you should ...tell me who he is."

I'd proved shock tactics ...worked with Franklyn. He ...wouldn't know I'd been upstairs ...and probably thought he'd ...stumbled on a lady Lone Wolf. ...I said to Melita, "I'll contact ...the guy who slammed you, and, ...with luck, get your ring back."

"And the pendant?"

"The pendant isn't yours." It ...suddenly struck me. "Was there ...anything in the canister besides ...the pendant?"

She looked blank. "You mean ...—other jewellery?"

"Forget it." I figured Frank...lyn had destroyed the letter ...written by David's mother. "I'll ...invite the guy to the apartment ...to-night."

Melita wanted to know ...whether she'd meet the man, ...but I told her no. I stressed ...that we'd come to a house where ...a murder had been committed ...and anything happening might ...be handled about in cross-ex...amination.

"Do me a favor, Melita," I ...begged. "Keep out of Warrie...wood affairs. All you want is ...your ring, isn't it?"

"But I don't like you being ...alone with him," she objected. ...That was a good one, but it was ...nice thinking.

I said, "I was brought up the ...hard way. What happened after ...he snatched the pendant?"

"He flung me across the room. ...I cracked my head."

"See what I mean?" I said. ..."You be a good girl and do what ...mother says."

In the end she promised she'd ...take in a film that night.

After dinner I heard her ...moving about, and presently she ...called through the partition. ..."Celeste, I don't think I'll ...bother with a film. I'll do a ...spot of study at the library."

She went to the library often ...when she wasn't working, which ...suited me because I didn't want ...her round when I had visitors. ...Cynthia, for instance. The ...minute I cracked the whip the ...poor thing came running. Not ...that I cracked it hard. I sent ...a polite note saying I'd love to ...see her at my apartment, and, ...coming on top of the billet doux ...I'd left under the Warriewood ...knocker, she didn't need any ...R.S.V.P.

She'd knocked so gently I al...most didn't hear, but, once in, ...she made a show of dignity. ..."Good afternoon, Celeste," she ...said, and, almost in the same ...breath, "I can't imagine what ...you should want to talk over."

She sat down and pulled off ...her glove. I thought I'd never ...seen anything looking less like ...fifty thousand pounds. She had ...on a black hat Hildegard would ...have put in the dust-bin, and the ...remains of a rabbit about her ...neck.

I said, "I thought it would ...be nice to chat about old times."

She was twiddling with her ...glove. She said, "You look very ...well, Celeste."

"That's because I sleep well," ...I said. She'd given me an open...ing. "Now, at Warriewood, I ...didn't sleep well. What with ...David tossing and turning! The ...night Mrs. Glass was killed I ...was very restless. I had to get ...up, in the end, to close my ...door."

"You didn't say that at the ...trial," she said in a strained ...voice.

I shrugged. "I figured there'd ...been enough trouble. But I've ...been turning it over. D'you ...think I should mention it when ...the case comes up again?"

The kettle was beginning to whistle and I begged her to excuse me. I made the tea strong because that's how she'd need it.

Her fingers were trembling as she took her cup and for an instant contacted mine, and I wondered what she was using for blood.

"Will you give the same evidence as before?" I asked. I might have been asking what she was going to wear at the races.

"Evidence?" she stalled. "Oh, you mean at David's trial. Of course. Why do you ask?"

I stood offering the cake dish. "I just wondered whether you were going to tell them you went into Mrs. Glass' room in the middle of the night," I said conversationally and pointed. "Those with the chocolate tops have a nice filling."

She spoke in a begging whisper. "Celeste—don't play with me. I didn't kill my aunt."

"Good gracious, I should hope not," I said. "That's what they're trying Curtis for."

"But you think I did!" She couldn't meet my eyes.

I bit into a biscuit. "I didn't say that, Cynthia."

"You saw me go into my aunt's room and you think I . . ."

She choked on the word. "Celeste—she was strangled—with David's cord!"

"Don't I know it!" I said. "It was the first thing I noticed when I found the poor thing. Where've I seen that cord? I asked myself and remembered. We'd had a pow-wow about it in the kitchen. Me, old Hildegard, and you! Don't you recollect I put it round my neck to show you how the slip-knot worked? I hope that didn't put ideas into anyone's head."

She put her untasted tea on the traymobile and fumbled for her handkerchief. "I'm so miserable, Celeste," she cried.

"You, miserable? With all *those millions?*"

"I never asked to be rich, Celeste. I never expected to be. I thought Aunt would will me only enough to live on. I misjudged her."

I RAISED my eyebrows. "So you went down in the middle of the night to tell her?" I felt that emphasis was called for. "Mrs. Glass had left you everything, but she could change her mind. She so often did. Is that why you didn't post the letter to her lawyer?"

She gave me one wild, startled look and began denying. "Celeste—I did post it. I told the policeman!"

"Did you tell him it was addressed to the lawyer?"

She suddenly began to weep over my chintz. "Oh, Celeste, be sorry for me," she sobbed. "I'm at breaking point. I've got no one to turn to."

I said, "Now, if I'd been you, Cynthia, I would have burned that letter instead of leaving it in your dressing-gown pocket where any snooping lady's maid could see it when she was helping you get ready to view the body."

She looked up miserably. "Surely you don't believe I'd let David hang if I thought he was innocent?"

"I wouldn't upset myself," I advised. "They'll put him away where he can't do any more harm than paint screwy pictures. He was heading that way even if he didn't wipe out his aunt."

"But he did, he did!" It was so much emphasis I nearly remembered the name of a poet who said you could protest too much.

"All right," I said. "He did. So where's the use of you and me bringing up new evidence that will only confuse the issue? They'll put him in an asylum, and you can go on being a gracious lady doing good to mankind with the money providence has bestowed upon you." It seemed the moment to let a little brightness into the dialogue. "Why don't you have a few pieces of your auntie's jewellery reset? There was a brooch . . ."

"Oh, don't, Celeste, don't," she pleaded. "I'll never wear anything of hers." If ever I saw a woebegone heiress this was it.

"Oh, come off it, Cynthia. You can have lots of fun," I said. "Why don't you come round here twice a week—say Tuesdays and Fridays? We could go places and cheer ourselves up and forget everything about who saw what or which old letter was never posted." I gave a friendly giggle. "You'll have to bring your cheque book though. I'm nearly always broke. Still, what's money for if you don't spend it?"

It was like trying to jolly up an Egyptian mummy. I thought she was right out for the count, but a gleam of suspicion came to her pale eyes.

"Does Franklyn come here?" she asked.

"That's with the roses of yesterday," I said. "Master Frank is one luxury I can't afford. If I have a man in my life he will have a bank balance I can lean against. No, thanks, Cyn, you can have your Franklyn Greenes." As if it had just occurred to me I added, "Or don't you want him either?"

"I'm afraid of him," she said, her voice so small you'd have thought he might have his ear to the keyhole.

"The world's over-run with men," I assured her. "We ought to be able to date us a couple. But not the way you're looking now. Let me fix your face in the boudoir."

She sat like a stricken lamb while I got to work on her. No one would look at her twice as she was, but, working on her face, figuring out the clothes I could steer her into buying, I reckoned I could fix her so she wouldn't be an embarrassment. The more I thought of it, the more it seemed we could be chums. We might even go on a trip. Paris, maybe.

When I'd finished she looked more like what you'd expect from an heiress, though she was a long way off fifty thousand pounds.

"You know, Cyn, your hair's quite pretty," I said. "Tuesday, I'll try it a new way."

She had a stubborn streak. As if it mattered what I thought of her, she said, "If I'd posted that letter it would have been worse for David."

"Forget it," I said. "Come early Tuesday."

Cynthia kept her appointments like a lady but explained she didn't have her hands on Aunt Maly's money or even on her old-fashioned jewellery and was eking along on Ponsonby's hand-outs. I wasn't one to make any snoopy lawyer a wake-up and I told her all I wanted was to pay my way, live respectably, and dress like a lady.

I'd improved her hair-do and helped her pick out a hat with chic to it, and, somehow, these little attentions put us on a friendly rather than a business basis.

The matter of Melita's ring worried me. I'd come to like the kid. She'd been so decent not bawling me out and doing what she thought was preventing me being caught in a jam. It's a shock to find someone believes in you when for so long no one has.

Immediately after her adventure at Warriewood I'd contacted Franklyn at the place where he was alleged to work, and, as I expected, he was chatty. It had been a long time between drinks, and he was bucked that at last I'd revealed my hideout.

I slicked myself up in a little thing with an embroidered C and satin sash which had been Cynthia's contribution, and he turned up half an hour after Melita had left for the library. The way he knocked, I knew he was feeling spry, and when I opened he skidded his hat across the room, kissed me, and poured himself a drink in the same split second.

I said, "What's new in murder?"

He flung away. "Don't spoil things."

"I wondered what was the idea of Inspector Hack planting David's pendant in the tea caddy," I said innocently.

He kept the glass at his lips, giving himself time to think. "Caddy?" he said at last, setting the glass down as if it was a museum piece. "Am I dumb or something?"

"Your hearing's failing," I told him. "What I said was, 'Where's the pendant you snatched from the kid at Mumma Glass' house this afternoon?' She's in Ward A and like to die. When you start throwing women about it should be on something softer than cement."

He swore, then said carefully, "I came on her with the thing in her hand. I supposed she was stealing." He grinned. "Pal of yours?"

"I'll be at her funeral."

"Rats," he said. "It was only a push."

"Her bones snap easy," I told him. "And she wasn't pinching the pendant. She'd found it accidentally — where you'd planted it, you rat!"

He didn't shout back. "Now, now, no sticks and stones, Celeste," he said evenly. He was trying to think his way out. "I suppose you sent her to Warriewood to snoop?"

"I took her," I said. I looked at the bottle. "If you were versed in etiquette you'd offer a girl some of her own liquor." While he was getting it I said, "What she told me jigsawed into what I saw myself. Franklyn Greene scramming for the front door."

He handed me my drink, smiling, as I went on: "The kid's sore in more places than one, Frankie, but I've persuaded her to settle for half what the pendant will fetch."

"Nice of you," he said. "But I like conducting my own affairs."

I said, "Then I take it she can tell the world. That will drag me in and I'm only human. Some policeman might cajole me into relating the whole story. Chap. One. The shades of night. Celeste, at request of Mrs. Glass puts pendant in drawer. Chap. Two. Comes the dawn. Celeste finds Mrs. G. dead but is curious to know whether murderer has taken pendant. Careless murderer has overlooked it. Chap. Three. Handsome cousin of accused Curtis asks innocent Celeste for time to look round Auntie's room. Chap. Four. Celeste, accompanied by copper, goes to scene of crime, looks in drawer and pendant has vanished. Riddle. Who took it? Nutmeg graters will be passed out to those who have the answer if they will kindly form a double queue."

This time he really gave himself a drink. He said slowly, "The thing won't fetch more than a hundred."

I said, "An expert who would prefer to be anonymous would treble your bid."

He grinned. "I suggest twenty-five would pay hospital fees."

"She's got her hurt feelings to consider and there's tape for her tongue."

"O.K.," he said irritably. "Suppose I was lucky enough to get two hundred. I give her a hundred. You'd be careful she didn't chisel you out of your cut?"

"The point doesn't arise," I said levelly. "You give her fifty per cent of the total. The other half's for me."

"I didn't hear." His voice was ice.

"You should have your ears blown," I told him. "Listen, Frankie. I'm a wake-up to myself. All I've got out of the Curtis case is the sack." How was he to know that wasn't true? "I've even lost my boy friend to an heiress."

"Don't talk rot. If I married Cynthia it wouldn't make any difference."

"Women dream of wedding rings," I told him. "Didn't it ever strike you some girl might love you for yourself alone?"

He knew I was kidding. "Don't give me that, Celeste. You're tough as they come."

I sighed. "I'm afraid you're right." I picked up the phone giving him a winning smile. "I've been told I have a good telephone voice," I said, beginning to dial. "I wonder will Inspector Hack think so!" If the bluff didn't come off I could dummy a dialogue. Hack could have gone to see his aunt Lizzie.

Franklyn took the receiver from me. "Don't let's start anything," he said. "The Curtis case isn't cold. David has still to be dealt with. Anything might happen in the meantime." He replaced the receiver, put his hand in his pocket, and then was wiggling David's pendant before me.

"A sweet thing," he said. He took the flowers from a vase on the mantel and dropped the pendant in. "Now," he went on, replacing the flowers. "Suppose I do the phoning and, by threats if necessary, stop you from touching the pendant till Hack arrives?"

"Continue," I said. "Suppose what?"

"I tell the inspector I saw the pendant and letter from David's mother in Aunt Maly's room when I went to look at her body. I remind him that, shortly after, you accompanied him into the room. When you came out and I had opportunity too look again said pendant had gone. Interested in Davy's welfare, I was anxious for justice to be done and did some snooping. The trail led here. You denied the theft but didn't he think he should search? And while he was about it look round for any of Aunt Maly's jewellery lawyer Ponsonby might recognise? The pieces were not enumerated in the will and might have been a temptation to the woman masquerading as a foreigner who had plenty of opportunities of getting her hand on them."

I started to call him a few names which came tripping to my tongue, but he went on, "Or suppose I say Aunt had told me about the pendant and that it was to be David's twenty-first birthday present? I'd just remembered, and wasn't it possible that, whereas Davy would hardly kill his aunt to get something that was to be his anyhow, someone else might? Wasn't it likely that the maid who had taken us all in knew about the pendant and crept to Mrs. Glass' room to pinch it and Mrs. Glass had awakened and . . ."

I made a swipe at him, but he ducked, laughing. "You double-crossing hound," I said. "You know very well where I was that night."

"But not all the night, sweetheart."

"You know I didn't kill the woman."

"Ah, but if I know my inspector, he's never been exactly happy about motive. And you have to remember you knew all about the cord."

"So did Cynthia, so did Hildegard, so did you. Don't you start throwing stones, Frankie, or you might break more windows than you expect. You're right about one thing though. You weren't with me all night. There's a before and after there's been a load of silence about. Before, when you came up to borrow a book, remember? And heard David talking to himself. My door was open. It says so in the evi-

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

dence. It was true what you said in court but I could tell all David talked about, not the bit you handpicked. Now we come to the after. When you'd crept downstairs David was dreaming so loudly I got out of bed to close my door. A girl's got to have some sleep. I could upset plenty of apple-carts telling what I saw."

"Always supposing they believed you," he said, and I wondered if, after all, I'd missed something the night I looked down after Frankie left and saw Cynthia moving quietly down the stairs. He went on, "Whatever you saw I had no part in it."

"It could be made to look that way," I said. "Especially if you married Cynthia. People might say you were in cahoots."

"You're crazy," he said.

"Maybe, but if I haven't painted the picture right, remember you used the wrong colors yourself when you said I might have crept down."

He became peevish. "All right, we've got hasty tongues. What's on your mind?"

"It's what's on your mind, Frankie. And that's Cynthia and your chance of dragging her to the altar. But maybe it doesn't suit me for Cyn to be Mrs. Greene. What's on your warped mind is that, as Mrs. Greene, you could guide her hand while she made a new will." This time I went and got my own drink. "You keep away from Cynthia," I warned. "She needs the woman's touch."

He said, "I seem to remember she threw you out."

"Misunderstandings occur," I admitted. His reminder had rung a bell. Warriewood was empty. Cyn would never go back. It would be a comfortable home for a girl who wasn't afraid of ghosts, especially if she had a pal like the Winsor kid for company. I made a mental note to put it to Cynthia.

I said to Franklyn, "Davy's pendant was on the agenda. I recollect. Suppose you give me a hundred for the kid you maltreated and promise that, as soon as David's trial is over, you'll fade."

He shook his head. "Oh no. I get a pension. I've got to be where Miss Warren can keep tabs. I mustn't bet."

"I'll see Cynthia won't stop you going," I promised.

"You managing her estate?"

"You've hit it."

He looked quizzical. "Suppose I say no?"

"I can always phone Inspector Hack."

"And I," he reminded me.

"Sure," I agreed. "We can both sling mud." I tried to sound less brittle. "Listen to Auntie Celeste, Frankie. We've been pals. We've had fun. Now it's over. We're in opposition. But you're rocking on your feet. You poor lost lamb, you haven't a dog's chance with Cyn the way things are, but for old time's sake I'll make it easy for you. I'll see your pension's increased."

I didn't like the way he was weighing me up. He said, "I've a hunch you're entering on a promising career, Celeste. I think I'd like to stick around and see how you make out."

I hadn't told him all I'd seen that night, but now he knew enough to want to cut himself a piece of cake. I expected him to turn on the charm. Why couldn't we be friends as always and go fifty-fifty in everything? But, when he stopped his infernal pacing, he rocked me.

"Yup," he said, "it would suit me fine, Celeste, if you told what you saw, because, putting two and two together and drawing an inference from your touching solicitude for Cynthia, I rather she knew more than I suspected. She knew she was down for a wad and couldn't afford to let nature take its course in case Aunt Maly changed her mind."

There was not a glimmer of hokum in his eye as he went on. "Now, if you can only convince Hack that David isn't his man, and, by and by, one early dawn Cynthia swings, why, you'll be doing me no end of a favor. It'll be a service I won't forget. You'll have proved you've kept your eyes open in my interest."

"Your interest, my foot," I said.

He made his eyes smile. "But, if because of your love for Cynthia, you hesitate, then, sweetheart, I would remind you I have an innate sense of justice and would feel impelled to inform Hack that you are withholding vital evidence for mercenary motives."

He picked up my glass, poured a tot, and handed me the drink. "You're a nice little cat, Celia Brown, but you can't have the mouse all to yourself." He filled his glass and came closer. "You see how it is, don't you, puss?"

He was putting it to me that with Cynthia gone he'd be the sole surviving sane relative. He said, "But you never can tell with juries. It would be less wearing if we let Cyn peacefully inherit and together guided her spending." He clinked my glass. "To our future, honey. Business and pleasure."

This snake butting in would spoil everything. I said, "You've forgotten what I'm liable to say if I'm heckled. It wouldn't only refer to Cynthia. I told you I got up to close my door after you left me and were supposed to be in beddy-bye. Well, I got up a second time. I kept worrying about Mrs. Glass. She'd asked me to leave a light on on the first floor landing, and I'd promised to keep my door open, and I like to keep promises. Everything was quite still—even David. And then I noticed something."

Franklyn was watching me, half cynical, half suspicious, his drink forgotten. "Yeah?" he said.

"David's door was open. There was moonlight. Someone was standing at the window."

"David himself," he said, quietly.

"That's what I thought. And then I heard David groan in his sleep and call out a girl's name. Claudine. Who the heck's Claudine?"

"A phantom," he said. "Stick to the point."

"I thought you'd be interested." I smeared sarcasm. "It struck me you might have come up to borrow a book on art."

"I wasn't in David's room one single moment that night," he declared warmly. He put his glass down and stood squarely in front of me. "You imagined you saw someone."

"Someone was there all right—leaning from the window."

"You're crazy," he snapped. "Even if I'd been there why should I lean out of the window?"

"I'll put up my hand for that. Maybe you wanted some fresh air after what you'd seen—or done!"

His breath gave a soda-water hiss, and his face slowly crimsoned, and suddenly his hands reached for my neck. The drink I was holding spilled down my house gown, and that made me mad, and I kicked at his ankles.

"Why, you blackmailing little tart!" he was saying among other things. I could hardly breathe and I was scared he'd forget they would hang him for what he might do to me. I stepped back and the table behind me tipped and the bottle and tray crashed and I was thankful to hear Melita's voice calling from the adjoining apartment.

"Celeste! Are you all right?"

The kid's voice brought Franklyn to his senses and he dropped his hands. "It's the other woman you half-killed this afternoon," I informed him. "It's getting to be a habit."

It was a pleasant sight to see him reach for his hat.

"We'll be seeing each other, puss," he promised. "Remember that. Wake up in the dark night and remember that." He made that his exit line and was out of the room and heading for the elevator as the partition door behind me opened a frightened fraction and the kid appeared.

"Come on in," I said. I closed the hall door, picked up the table and set the tray on it. I kicked the broken glass where it wouldn't do any harm till I could sweep it up. I guess the kid came from a home where no one threw the coffeepot.

She said, "I was so worried about you I couldn't concentrate at the library. I'd just got in when I heard the crash."

"It's all right, kid," I assured her. "The necking was a little fierce, that's all."

I told her to wait and went to my bedroom and came back and slipped something into her palm. "At least I recovered your ring, kid," I said. I could afford it. Franklyn had been so het up he'd forgotten his play-acting with the pendant. When his head cleared he would remember it in the vase. He'd brood a bit and then come back and say let's forgive and forget.

Or would he? Maybe I'd told him too much. It just might have been him leaning out of the window of David's room. I hadn't waited to see. I'd tumbled back into bed and was asleep almost at once. There'd been no murder then, and it hadn't seemed important.

I remembered Franklyn's crack. "We'll be seeing each other, puss. Wake up in the dark night and remember that." Now it sounded something more than a jolly little reminder. Before I went to bed I not only locked the door but shot the bolt.

★ ★ ★

Melita

As I stood in the dark my heart was beating so violently I thought Celeste and Franklyn would surely hear it through the partition against which I pressed my ear.

It had been worth the half-hour wait in the shadows before I saw Franklyn pause beneath the entrance light, checking the address. I think, all along, I had guessed it would be he. I gave him a few minutes and then followed.

The elevator was an automatic, and I brought it down and pressed the button to take me to the floor below our own. I walked the one flight and tiptoed down the silent stone corridor to my room.

The dislike I had had for Franklyn the boy magnified into bitter distrust of Franklyn the man, and I was prepared to believe that he had murdered Mrs. Glass in the expectation of some quick gain. And, on the heels of that terrible thought, I heard him call Celeste a vile name. There was a crash, followed by sounds my imagination invested with horrid inference. When at last I could manage words they sounded inane and inadequate.

Seconds of waiting seemed spreading into eternity before the sound of footsteps hurrying toward the elevator gave me a measure of relief. Then I heard Celeste composedly bidding me come in.

Her lips were wearing their characteristically impish grin, and she began inventing a preposterous story.

When she gave me my ring I reasoned that she couldn't be wholly rapacious, had invented the story of its theft at Warriewood in a moment of temptation and was opportunely dramatising its return.

She was blackmailing Cynthia and that should have made any intimacy intolerable, but she had an engaging personality and, alone in the world myself, I think I had a sneaking sympathy for her in her desire for security. Moreover, I believed she was not being wantonly unjust to David, but thought him unbalanced and, with her queer reasoning, that salved her conscience.

Though sophisticated regarding matters which, till recently, had never touched the fringe of my life, Celeste was naive to the point of childishness on some things and, next morning, was transparently curious as to whether I would be at home that afternoon. I gained the impression that she was going to entertain a man friend and smilingly told her I would be working late. She grinned good-naturedly, not in the least put out because she had been seen through and, a few minutes later, came into my apartment carrying a smartly tailored light angora.

"This'll get my picture in the paper when I wear it at the trial next week," she said, draping it from under her chin. "Meantime there is a guy I purpose knocking silly." She offered to put the frock on and slipped out of her house coat.

More than one would be impressed, I thought as she turned this way and that before the long mirror, admiring herself from varying angles. She said, "I was reading about women being a mass of contradictions. You know, Mel, I think it was right." She giggled. "Did you ever hear that song about the coster's tart? Whenever he blacked her eye she knew that her Bill loved her. I guess I've got me a Bill."

Franklyn! For an instant it seemed incredible she could retain the remotest regard for the man, but I knew my own sex well enough to know it was unpredictable in affairs of the heart.

"I ought to get myself psycho-analysed," Celeste was saying. "And I would, too, only they make you say all the things that come into your head."

Half the night I'd wondered whether I should go to Inspector Hack and tell of the conversation I'd overheard, but, in the end, it was Dr. Ellershaw I talked to and then not till late in the afternoon.

"David should be very grateful to you," he said after a patient listening. "For a girl of your upbringing and susceptibilities you are moving in queer company. It might even be dangerous. I feel that in your enthusiasm you may let your prejudices run away with you. Your story cannot be substantiated." He put his finger on my wrist in his friendly fashion. "There, I'm being a wet blanket as usual."

"No, you're perfectly right," I said unhappily.

His eyes twinkled. "I saw David this afternoon and he spoke of you. He never mentioned Claudine." I suppose he noticed how I flushed and he said thoughtfully, "I feel it was lucky for Davy that you turned up. I am very hopeful that, now he has unburdened himself, we shall see a change in him."

He meant to be kind, but I was dispirited when I left him. I couldn't see that I'd accomplished anything but bring about an improvement in David's mental health and, in the end, would he thank me for that? When he was living in his dream with Claudine he was happy. Now he would gradually come to a clear realisation of his dreadful position. Then would he love me? Rather, would he hate me?

In the rear mirror of a store window I caught sight of a woman whose face more than matched my present melancholy. It was Cynthia Warren, and she was gazing down at a small, squat person who had placed herself squarely in front of her and was so close to me I could have reached back and touched her faded black blouse.

I couldn't see the smaller woman's face, but, somewhere, I had seen the pitiful hat and, immediately I heard her voice, I knew she was the cook who had testified at David's trial.

"I bain wondering, Miss Cynthia, if dead folk bain just dead folk or do they come back to keep quiet watch." She seemed to ponder the thought, and then abruptly dipped into a paper bag she was holding. She held up a black hat. "I bain spending dead folks' leavings too," she announced and let the tawdry thing drop back into the bag.

I couldn't catch Cynthia's murmured comment, but the cook went on sturdily: "I bain to the cemetery but it bain't the same. Folks belong where they died. If you'd be so kind, miss, I bain go back to Warriewood sometimes and tidy the poor soul's room."

"Why, yes, Hildegard," Cynthia said, obviously anxious to get away. I caught something about speaking to Celeste, and then they were moving in opposite directions. In the glass I could follow Cynthia's retreating form and realised why her appearance had been puzzling me.

In court she had seemed drably uninteresting. Now, though the most rigid stickler for the proprieties could not have faulted her, she was dressed with expensive distinction. When I got back to the apartment I described her ensemble to Celeste, and she was interested and pleased.

"I kidded her into buying that," she said.

"You? I thought she sacked you?"

"Cynthia's a new woman," she said lightly. "I'm making her take an interest in life." She watched closely to see how I'd react to her next surprise. She said, "She wants me to caretake Warriewood for her."

I considered. "It's a big house, isn't it?"

"We could shut up some of the rooms."

"We?"

"Now, pet, you don't think I'd throw you out in the snow? Or are you afraid of ghosts?" she asked.

"Don't be absurd, Celeste," I said.

"Well, that's settled. We'll give notice here and skiddoo tomorrow. I'll find a woman to look after our eats."

I said, remembering, "What about the cook who was with you previously?"

"Hildegard? I'd thought of her. She's as jolly as a mummy, but she makes a wonderful shrimp pie."

Next morning we moved to Warriewood. It seemed that once Celeste had made up her mind she couldn't get out of the apartment quickly enough, but we had hardly set our bags down before she was making for the phone. "I clean forgot I'm so important," she said. "I've got to report any change of address."

I heard her ask for Sergeant Craydon and there was some small talk which was certainly not official, and I moved out of hearing. She was on the wire quite a time, but at last I heard her hang up and rejoined her. When she saw me she grinned. "How do you know when a man's in love?"

"I wouldn't know," I said. I thought of David and it hurt because David would be thinking of Claudine.

Contrary to my expectation Celeste didn't pursue the subject. She was much occupied with private thought while we settled in, and it was not till we were in the middle of a scratch lunch that she let me see that her phone conversation was still on her mind. She suddenly laughed. "What do you know? I forgot to tell him I'd moved."

When the cook joined the household in the late afternoon Celeste installed her in the room off the first floor corridor. The old lady gave a creditable dinner and, afterwards, Celeste, carefully made up and plainly anxious to look her best, went off on some mysterious mission, and I was free to look through the rooms.

I met Hildegard at the top of the stairs an hour after Celeste's departure and congratulated her on the meal she had prepared at such short notice. "You must have been a treasure to Mrs. Glass," I said.

I wondered whether she heard, for her eyes went past me, and she was definitely lost in some maze of thought, and I wondered whether it had to do with the thing which "had all begun with the cook." It seemed impossible that this squat and now rigid little bundle could have had any influence on David's life.

The quiet pressed down from the lofty, beamed ceiling and surged up the ill-lit stairs as I waited for her to speak.

At long last her eyes sought mine again, and she said, "Only another week and then 'twill be the beginning of the rightful end, miss." She nodded her head in grim satisfaction. "Guilty, Curtis, then I say. And I'll be there to see his face go white with the terror of the rope."

The scorching words shocked me into protest. "Oh, no, no. Not David Curtis." Her eyes rested on my stricken face and with an effort I controlled myself. "He looks such a nice boy," I said, weakly. "I mean—in his photograph."

"As sure as God made little apples his was the blame, miss," she said and left me, making her way slowly downstairs.

I climbed to Celeste's old room in the attic and imagined Franklyn listening outside David's door, then went into David's room and looked down from the window as someone unknown had looked in the middle of the fatal night. I recalled a scrap of evidence from the trial. Davy's slippers had been found in the shrubbery beneath the window.

I asked myself whether in person Celeste had seen was not at that moment getting rid of them to throw suspicion on David, who had told the police he didn't know where they were.

Downstairs I stood in the main hall listening to small, indefinable sounds which indicated Hildegard was busy with some late chores in the kitchen. I remembered her laborious descent, made a quick decision and flew up the stairs, past Cynthia's old room, past where Franklyn once slept and round the corner into the little passage.

The door of the cook's room was not locked, and I went in. I don't know what I expected to see but no chance was too long to take in David's interest.

Idly, I pulled open the drawer of her dressing-table and was never more astonished in my life, for right before my eyes was the largest collection of paper money I had ever seen outside a bank. The notes were of varying denominations, many of them of high value, but all higgledy-piggledy as though they were of no more consequence than the curling pins and switch of false hair that lay with them.

The sight of so much money in such circumstances shocked and alarmed me, and I closed the drawer, fearful of interruption. I was beset with a new perplexity, for if Hildegard was a miser she was a curiously careless one.

She had told Cynthia she had been spending other folks' leavings. Was this staggering amount so carelessly tumbled into her dressing-table drawer part of it?

In my room I assured myself that Hildegard's affairs were no

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...ness of mine. Even specu-
...ion was impertinent, and I
...ded to go to the kitchen
...with some pretence but in the
...ope of gossip. She had seemed
...ously long about her chores
...ing at the bottom of the stairs,
...become conscious of the dis-
...concerting stillness of the
...house. The old woman must
...have gone up to bed and
...passed my room without my
...knowledge.

I took the few steps that
brought me abreast the room in
which Mrs. Glass had died. I
had been in every other room
in the house and, with the
recollection of the terrible
scene that had been enacted
within, I hesitated to turn the
door handle. When I did it
was with almost reverent
gentleness.

The scent of violets came
overpoweringly. A bedside
lamp threw a soft glow on a
large pony, dark against a snow-
white pillow. Hildegard was
sleeping, her squat figure a
huddled blur beside the bed,
her plump hands clasped be-
neath her chin in an attitude
of prayer.

Embarrassed that I should
have intruded upon so private
a moment, I withdrew and re-
turned to my room. Half an
hour went by before I heard
the cook making her heavy
way up the stairs. Passing my
door she sighed deeply.
Fatigue or sorrow? I felt un-
comfortably alone. I undressed
and put on a gown and, setting
the door ajar, lay on the bed
waiting.

On the borderland of sleep
I was yanked into consciousness
by the yodelled announcement
of Celeste's return. Almost be-
fore I was off the bed she
cried again.

"Melita! Yoo-hoo!"

She was at the bottom of the
stairs, unaware and possibly
unconscious that her behaviour
at that hour was unorthodox.
She beckoned me down and
dragged me kitchenward say-
ing she needed tea and talk.
Removing her hat she set it
on the well-scrubbed table
with an affectionate pat, then
perched herself on the edge
as I set the kettle to boil.

"You'll never guess." The
pet phrase invariably prefaced
something unusual, and she
didn't disappoint. "I'm re-
formed," she announced and
cord pensively at the ceiling,
considering tongue feeling
the edge of her fine white
teeth. "Well—half reformed,"
she amended.

She clasped her hands about
her crossed knees. "You know
something?" she asked. "Celia
Brown thought she knew all the
answers and then, wham! It
came out of the blue." She
fiddled in her handbag and
brought out David's pendant.

"Take care of it, Melita,"
she said. "In the middle of the
night I might feel my halo
slipping. It belongs to David
Curtis. If they lock him up,
keep it. No one will know. But
don't let me ever see it again."

I put the pendant out of
sight, wondering at this new
Celeste. I could guess at a
cause and I was relieved be-
cause nothing Franklyn could
have said would have made
her give up anything so valu-
able. I put my hand on hers.
"Who is he, Celeste?" I asked.

The impish grin came. "The
sergeant who put my pot on
when he found me playing
foreign. He knew me when I
was Celia Brown and he'd
never forgotten me though he
had nothing to get sentimental
about but my fingerprints.
First time I saw him solo I
thought it would be the usual
pass. I expected some tale about
making things easy if! But
there were no ifs. It made me
wonder. I met him several times
lately."

She shrugged. "No passes!
I thought I must be slipping.
But, to-night, the way he talked
sort of got me here." She
touched her heart and looked
at me as though what she was
telling was too incredulous for
belief. "He said darling, would
I marry him?"

"And you said yes," I cried
eagerly. "Why, that's wonder-
ful. Now you'll get security."

"Oh, but I didn't say yes,"
she said disappointingly. "I
was too flabbergasted. I still
am. But he told me not to
hurry. To think it over. And,
believe me, there's plenty to
think over."

"But you love him," I urged
and, remembering, sighed with
relief. "I was afraid it might
be Franklyn."

She clenched her small fists
and held her head, rocking in
mock agony. "Oh, Melita,"
she said and bit his name.
"Franklyn! if I'd known there
was a Danny Craydon in the
world I'd have kicked Frank-
lyn down the attic stairs."

She'd met a real man, and
she'd fallen hard, but she'd
had so many tough experiences
she couldn't believe the truth.
"I guess we'll see plenty of
Danny at Warriewood now,"
I said.

"Oh, I must have it bad,
Mel," she exclaimed. "I for-
got to tell him I'd moved.
There seemed so much else to
talk about. But it's just as well.
He'd think it strange, me liv-
ing in Cynthia's house. I'm be-
ginning to think it queer my-
self."

She slid from the table and
put an impulsive arm about
me. "Remember the day I
ladled out advice to you?" She
yawned deliciously. "Let's go to
bed. I've a lovely dream in
mind."

Settling for sleep I permitted
myself the sweet foolishness
of pinning David's pendant
over my heart.

But I didn't dream of him.
I was back in high-school days,
taking part in a Christmas play
in which, as a crinolined
heroine laden with parcels, I
was making timid approach to
a periwigged fop who, when
he faced me, turned out to be
Franklyn Greene. I awoke,
holding to an idea skirting
consciousness and knew that I
would never be able to really
help David until I made the ef-
fort suggested by the dream.

If Franklyn had killed Mrs.
Glass, in the hope of quick
gain, was he one to sit down
and nurse the wounds of dis-
appointment or would he strike
again if the risk warranted?
Could he be made to believe
that time was the essence of
the contract?

I had had no contact with
him since childhood, and he
would never remember me. Get-
ting to know him with the de-
gree of intimacy I contem-
plated was another matter but
it could be managed.

★ ★ ★

Franklyn

Suicide! Yup—believe it or
not—I flirted with the idea.
Suicide, that's for me, I said
in the middle of a sticky night.
A nice, quick way out of
trouble, and did I have a dish
of it!

I was having the devil's own
luck. Aunt Maly's departure
had paid no dividend, Cynthia
was sheltering somewhere be-
hind her ridiculous will, and
Celeste had fled with the pen-
dant.

I wasn't happy about the
tete-a-tete with Celeste. If she
started slinging words in the
wrong places anything might
happen during David's next
trial. I'd been crazy to lose
my temper with her, but she'd
rocked me so hard I'd forgotten
my bit of playacting with
David's pendant. And I needed
some collateral badly.

I decided I'd have a stab at
getting it back so I went to
the Golquin a couple of even-
ings later. But all I got from
my visit was a perky message
the double-crossing little so-
and-so had left with the apart-
ment manageress. "If a gentle-
man calls tell him I've gone
to Shangri-la."

In the blackest hour of that
night, I gave some thought to
dealing myself the nasty finale
Clanmorgan had chosen. And
then—came the dawn. A blue
sky—birds a-chirrup—a buzz
with the razor—a brisk shower,
and I was whistling "Celia."

A glance in the mirror re-
minded me that I was young,
virile, and handsome in the
bold, assertive way that must
have made Clanmorgan stick
out from the crowd in his mid-
twenties. By the time I was
knotting the green-and-gold tie
the little brunette at the Blue-
berry had given me, I knew it
was going to be a lovely day.

And, lighting my pipe in
front of the office a couple of
hours later, my sideways glance
lit on the neat ankles of little
Lady Luck. The following line
to a pleasing sufficiency of
hips set the imagination work-
ing. She was small made, fair,
and definitely appealing as,
with a sort of childish awk-
wardness, she clutched a num-
ber of small packages.

I found encouragement in
her glance, but somehow she
reminded me of Claudine al-
though they had no physical
resemblance, and I was telling
myself a new technique would
be called for when she put it
right in my lap. I didn't even
have to cock an eye, for a par-
cel slipped from her grasp and
fell at my feet, and it was cue
for chivalry.

EMBARRASS-
MENT added to the girl's awk-
wardness, for, while I was
restoring the fallen package,
another fell. After I'd retrieved
it I held her arms lightly, pre-
tending a humorous anxiety.
As she shifted the bundles to
get a firmer grip the handbag
she had clutched under her
arm fell. I laughed, and she
laughed, and then we were
laughing together, but I knew
she was Red Riding Hood on
her way to grandma's, unaware
of the big, bad wolf.

I had Big Brother's smile and
the rear door of the car open.
"Supposing I drive you where
you're bound for?" I said be-
fore she had time to remember
what Mother said about talking
to strangers. I pedalled the
light comedy, playing taxi.
"Where to, madam?"

She gave me the address of
a dentist, an excuse for ac-
cepting, saying she was late
on an appointment. I drove
carefully and made immediate
headway. She was new to town,
had no people, and hadn't had
time to make local friends.
When I set her down I'd been
so circumspect, so desirous of
showing a stranger hospitality,
I'd got myself a dinner date.

I took her to an out-of-
town place where I was un-
known and, after dinner, we
drove around, and she took off
her hat and let the wind blow
her hair.

We stopped to admire the
moon, and I made a minor
pass which she resisted, but
with no violent reaction.

The following night, when
we were taking a second help-
ing of moon, she told me she'd
landed the job she'd been after.
"It's with Miss Cynthia War-
ren," she said so unexpectedly
that I found my fingers crush-
ing the wheel. "Have you
heard of her?"

I stalled. "Warren? The
name's familiar. Cynthia War-
ren? No, I can't place it,
Melanie." Her name was
Melanie Winter. I'd told her
I was Frank Hennessy.

"I think we'll get along," she
confessed. "Miss Warren's got
the right idea. She believes in
giving her money away while
she is able to see people enjoy
it."

I couldn't imagine Cynthia
having any sort of opinion of
her own, but you never could
tell.

"She's simply rolling in
money," the kid said.

I managed a grin. "And
you're going to help her spend
it? Where'll you distribute
from? An office with a big
brass plate?"

She shook her head, and
then came the second shock.
"I'll work and live at Miss
Warren's home," she said. "It's
a big house called Warriewood
she's just reopened. I'm in-
stalled already. You can drive
me there, but I'm not sure of
my employer's attitude towards
followers. You'll have to leave
me at the gate."

I slipped my fingers about
hers. They were like ice.
"You're cold, Melanie," I said.
"I'd better run you out to
this——?" I pretended I'd for-
gotten the name.

She gave me the address.
"You're awfully understand-
ing," she said and explained
that she'd had a lot of running
round and was dog-tired.

"I've been thoughtless," I
said and turned the car. On
the way to Warriewood I
wormed it out of her that Miss
Warren was employing a daily
maid besides herself and I
kidded I was glad there were
no menfolk. I suggested dinner
together next evening, and she
said she would love it and,
from the car, I watched her
push the wooden gate and dis-
appear into the gloom.

I was glad to be rid of her.
I had a lot of thinking to do.

Melanie was a few minutes
late for her appointment next
day. She looked a picture,
with her color heightened by
her hurry, I guess. In the
restaurant she placed her
gloves beside her plate and,
alongside them, a large en-
velope. It was face up and,
in the left-hand corner, I read
the printed words, PONSONBY
AND PONSONBY, SOLICI-
TORS, then written in ink
were words that started a sing-
ing in my heart—Cynthia
Warren. Will.

It took something to keep
my voice under control.
"You've been busy," I said
with a careless nod at the en-
velope.

"Oh that! It's what kept
me late. Miss Warren con-
tacted me at the hairdresser's
and told me to pick it up from
the lawyer's." She chattered
on. "We've been frightfully
busy, but I'm going to like the
job. To-day we've investigated
all sorts of charities—even-
tides, spastics, orphanages,
you've no idea." She thrust
the will into her handbag.

I was glad to remember the
safe Aunt Maly had used for
her jewels had been carried
off by Inspector Hack. I said,
"A will's an important docu-
ment. I suppose you've got a
safe place for it?" She told
me it wouldn't be her responsi-
bility, and in any case it
wouldn't be any good after
to-morrow because the lawyer
was going to redraw it.

The soup arrived, and, when
the waiter had gone, she
looked about cautiously and
whispered, pop-eyed, "I've
found out something about that
house, Warriewood. It was the
scene of a crime!"

"Of course," I said, affecting
sudden realisation. "Warrie-
wood! The Curtis case."

She asked timorously, "What
do you think? About me stay-
ing at the house?"

I said carefully, "Sometime
or other every house has ex-
perienced unpleasantness, I
guess." I smiled. "You won't
be expected to sleep in the
death chamber?"

She permitted herself a little
shudder. "Oh, no. That's
closed. I'll be up in the attic."

"With Miss Warren for com-
pany?" I realised at once it
was an unwise question be-
cause I was not supposed to
know there were two attic
rooms; but she didn't notice.

"Miss Warren has her own
room on the first floor."

"You're not inferring you'll
share a room with the maid?"
I felt I'd used the right note
of social snobbery.

She shook her head. "She's
a daily. She sleeps out. But if
Miss Warren's not afraid to
sleep by herself on the first
floor why should I be scared
in the attic?" she asked.

"They've got Curtis behind
bars," I said. "You're far too
intelligent to let silly super-
stition stand in your light."

She gave me a coy glance.
"I think I was wanting you to
worry about me."

"I'd worry if I thought
there was reason," I said.

"Anyway I sleep like a log,"
she told me, "so let's not talk
about it any more." She asked
if I would be driving her any-
where before I took her to
Warriewood.

"You've only to command,"
I said. I wanted to keep her
out at least till Cynthia had
gone to bed. I couldn't resist
asking whether Miss Warren
would be expecting her home
early.

She told me no. "If she's in
bed when I get back I'm to
leave that document in her
room as I go up. I guess she'll
sleep with it under her pillow.
Isn't it funny how people fuss
over something they can alter
any old day of the week?"

I hardly heard what she said
as we drove through the quiet
night. It was pure mush and,
when I stopped the car at the
place she had made up her
mind was the perfect romantic
setting, she actually snuggled
against my arm. I let her
dream.

We sat in the car for quite
a time, like love-sick loons.
Goodness knows what she was
thinking, but I was busy with
the thought that the daily maid
slept out and Cynthia would
have the will.

The only one who could con-
nect me with that document
was this kid who was clinging
to my hand and who would
presently climb to "sleep like
a log" in the attic.

When I got back to my hotel,
I rang up one of my creditors
from the night porter's desk.
I told him I'd be seeing him
in the morning. I amended that
quickly. Not morning. After-
noon. In the morning I was
going to the jeweller's with
my fiancee to select the en-
gagement ring. Yes, sir, my
fiancee, Miss Cynthia Warren.
I thanked him for his con-
gratulations.

When I hung up I found the
night porter goggling as I'd
expected. "I couldn't help
overhearing, sir," he said.
"Would you permit me to wish
you great happiness?"

As we shook hands I winced,
and he asked was something
wrong. I laughed ruefully.

"It's a rotten thing to con-
fess on such an occasion," I
told him. "But I've a whale
of a stomachache." He sug-
gested brandy and port wine,
but I shook my head. "No
thanks, old man." I explained
I'd made a vow that liquor
and I would part the minute
some nice girl agreed to marry
me.

"Very wise, too," he said
and, as I winced again, "but,
don't you think that just this
once . . ."

I told him I thought I'd be
better when I lay down.

"But I tell you what you
can do," I said. "When you
collect the shoes for cleaning
open my door and look in. If
I'm awake I'll hear you and
if I'm no better I'll take you
up on your port wine and
brandy. But if I don't speak,
be a good chap and don't dis-
turb me."

"Ah, sleep! That's the tic-
ket," he said, sagely.

I knew I could rely on the
old goat for a perfect alibi.

.

The light has been dimmed
in the corridor and there are
shoes on every mat, including
my own. The porter collects
them at 2 a.m. regularly as
clockwork. The blanketed
bundle in my bed looks exactly
like a sleeping man with his
face to the wall.

My watch says 1.25. When
the town clock chimes the half
I'll go . . .

It's a good gamble. A better
bet than all your horses, be-
cause, with Davy likely to
hang, I'll be Cynthia's nearest
relative. It'll be queer, all those
headlines — Maniac Strangles
Two Women. Tough on the
kid but that's how it goes, and
she's the only one who could
bawl me out when to-morrow
I weep over the news that my
fiancee is dead on the very
morning we'd planned to buy
the engagement ring.

I have the key of the front
door. I could walk blindfold
through that house.

★ ★ ★

Melita

We waited grouped about the
phone in the complete dark.
I could hear Inspector Hack's
labored breathing and hoped
he hadn't gone to sleep. The
young sergeant whispered, "It's
half-past one," and the dial
of his watch floated for a sec-
ond or two in luminous con-
firmation.

The inspector said, "We'll
give him a bit longer," and
stifled a yawn. I felt he was
losing confidence in my story,
and in the last hour, with
every minute of waiting, doubts
had accumulated in my own
mind. If Franklyn didn't come
all my hopes crumbled.

"He'll be here," I said stub-
bornly.

My throat was sore with long
whispering and the tension of
listening for the phone to ring.
It would be no more than a
tinkle, for Sergeant Craydon
had carefully smothered the
bell. An hour and more ago I
had stood just inside the door
of Celeste's dark room and
heard her breathing in gentle
sleep and, long since, had lis-
tened to Hildegard's dragging
footsteps pass my bedroom on
the way to her own.

From the corner of the little
passage I had seen that her
light was out and had then
gone down and admitted In-
spector Hack and Celeste's
sergeant. I wondered what
Dan Craydon would be think-
ing if he knew she was in the
house. For reasons best known
to himself, and only guessed
at by me, the inspector had
decided not to tell him.

The slow minutes dragged
by, and the sergeant tried to
relieve the boredom by whist-
ling "Celia" through his teeth.
The inspector told him to shut
up and, almost immediately,
the telephone tinkled faintly.

"Hack." It was whispered
identification.

The voice at the other end
of the wire seemed to be going
on interminably, Hack inter-
rupting with only occasional
syllables. The faintest click told
me he had hung up. I felt a
hand on my arm and his whis-
per. "Greene's on his way."

It was what I wanted, but
a cold chill passed down my
spine as Hack went on, out-
lining Franklyn's preparations.

"It'll take him twenty min-
utes more even if he drives
fast, and I don't think he will,"
he said at length. "He'll come
by a devious route and take
it easy so's not to attract
attention." He squeezed my
arm again. "Don't worry,
miss. My men will be on his
tail." He hesitated and then
said earnestly, "You're sure
you want to go on with this?"

"Of course." I told him. It
seemed to me they were being
very leisurely about it; then
already we should be making
for our planned positions. Ages
passed before he said, "Well,
I guess you and me climb up-
stairs. I just might be wrong
about him not driving fast."

Sergeant Craydon whispered
encouragingly. "You'll be
O.K., Miss Winsor. I'll be
down here and right on my
toes. I'll know the minute he
comes in."

"You bet," the inspector
added.

He was a very different in-

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

special to the one I'd interviewed after Franklyn left me at the gate of Warriewood and I'd taxied to police headquarters. I had realised, as soon as I broached the matter, that I was stepping on official corns and that few things would fall so gratifyingly on Inspector Hack's ears as the jury's neat disposal of David Curtis.

He was bored with the case and annoyed that there should have to be repetition. His manner and the heavy formality of the police-office furnishings depressed me.

I was handicapped by loyalty to Celeste and an intuition that it would be dangerous to arouse her antagonism, and so, in recounting the conversation carried on between her and Franklyn at the Golquin, I mentioned neither the pendant nor ring and gave no hint that she was blackmailing Cynthia.

With these deletions my story sounded unconvincing even to my prejudiced ears, and the inspector was by no means inclined to the belief that any miscarriage of justice was pending, but, when I said Celeste had accused Franklyn of withholding words used by David on the night of the murder, he said at once, "What words?"

I didn't know, of course. I told him that Celeste had seen someone standing at David's window in the middle of the night.

"It was probably David himself," he said.

"And Cynthia Warren might know more. Celeste saw her . . ."

"Celeste is a dismissed servant." He rose with a gesture of finality. "Thank you for your information, miss." He added without enthusiasm, "To-morrow I'll have another talk with these people."

I said stubbornly: "I think Franklyn Greene killed Mrs. Glass. He got nothing from her will and I believe he is planning to kill Cynthia Warren—not next week or in the next few days, but to-night."

That roused him, and I told him how I'd pretended I was Melanie Winter working for Miss Warren, how I'd picked up Franklyn and led him to believe Cynthia had returned to Warriewood and would, that night, have her will in her bedroom. I'd called on the law firm of Ponsonby and Ponsonby with a plausible pretext about arranging an interview for next day, and, while there, had asked a susceptible young clerk if he could oblige me with a long envelope. It had been simple to inscribe it, thrust in some blank paper and seal it impressively.

Hack said, "Suppose Greene does come. He takes the will. It's blank paper. The joke's on him."

"It will not be sufficient for him to destroy it. He must destroy Cynthia as well," I argued. "He'll come to Warriewood to-night because he dare not wait longer. He'll look for the will in Cynthia's room. I've hinted it will be under her pillow."

"Under your pillow, miss," he reminded me soberly.

"I'll manage so he doesn't see my face," I said.

Everything depended on whether I had read Franklyn aright. I hadn't missed the tensing of his hands on the driving wheel when I told him I'd got a job with Cynthia Warren. In his carefully phrased questions about the disposition of those who would be sleeping at Warriewood I read a determination to visit the house that night. It had to be that night, because he believed the will would be redrawn on the morrow.

I asked the inspector, "If Franklyn comes to-night, won't it make you think a great deal about the murder of Mrs. Glass?"

He said it would. "But you mustn't take things for granted, miss," he warned. "Supposing Greene attempts to kill you thinking you're Cynthia Warren? What then? We've got him on one charge. But it doesn't let Curtis out on the other."

"Oh, it will, it will," I cried impetuously. "It will link two crimes. It will give you the opportunity to question and question, and you will bring Celeste and Cynthia into it and something vital will emerge. Anything as long as you're in the house to-night and promise not to interfere until I scream."

He gave me a queer look. "I hope you realise, young lady, there could be a slip."

How could there be, I thought.

After seemingly endless discussion I promised I would give the signal for the inspector to interfere after Franklyn had taken the envelope which he would think contained Cynthia's will. I intended nothing of the sort. I wanted Franklyn caught red-handed, about to do to me the thing I was convinced he had done to Mrs. Glass.

The inspector pushed a buzzer and presently a young officer entered. He was tall and slim and debonair, with square shoulders and a small moustache. Inspector Hack grunted, "Meet Sergeant Craydon, the Beau Brummell of the police force," and I guessed I was meeting the man who was ready to forgive so much in Celeste.

A detective called Ramsay appeared, eyeing me with interest as his superior told him of what was afoot. It hadn't struck me that Franklyn could be followed from his hotel, and I felt that the whole police force was behind me when the inspector despatched me to Warriewood in a taxi with the comforting knowledge that he and Celeste's sergeant were following discreetly in a private car.

I led Inspector Hack up the stairs, and, in my room, to the old-style wardrobe from which I had removed all clothes. In preparation for his vigil I had placed a stout, up-ended suitcase for him to sit on, and he appreciated the thought.

I heard him accommodating his bulk to the limited space and then his whisper, "Everything's going to be all right, miss. Craydon will be right behind him when he comes up. The minute you give the signal we'll grab."

I was still anxious they might be premature. "You won't move till I scream?"

"No, miss," he said, "but be sure to let out a good one as soon as he gets the will. Don't wait a moment after that. Greene's not taking all those precautions just to pinch a document."

I set the long envelope I had used as bait for Franklyn under my pillow a little towards the outer edge, then lay on my side facing the door, the coverings pulled up to my neck.

Five minutes must have passed, surely, perhaps ten, when a sound came from the corridor, and, instinctively, I pulled the clothes a mite higher and my eyes widened to help my listening ears. A queer shuffling drew nearer and stopped outside the part-open door. Someone was standing there listening; but not Franklyn, surely. Franklyn would come creeping inaudibly.

For half a minute, perhaps, there was silence; then the shuffling recommenced, receding in the direction of the stairs, and, half-risen in my bed the better to hear, I recognised the jerky steps of old Hildegard, who had chosen this inopportune moment to make her way to the floor below.

I found myself counting, two steps to each stair, following her descent in my mind till the sound died, wondering if she had wakened on the thought of some forgotten chore or was making her way again by the bed of her murdered mistress.

Right in the midst of my muddled thought it happened. In the sudden weighing of the atmosphere and deepening of the near darkness I sensed a hovering presence that hypnotised my body into rigidity. Someone had not only entered the room but was standing beside my bed.

A calloused finger-edge grazed my chin and a hand slid beneath my pillow, lingered a second or two, and cautiously withdrew. The tiniest crackle acquainted me that Franklyn had the envelope, and there he was bending over me, whispering, "Cynthia."

Then abruptly, before I could attempt the signalling scream, a monstrous palm covered my mouth and pressed cruelly upward, closing my nostrils. At the same moment the weight of a heavy body stilled my legs, and my arms were clamped to my sides with agonising pressure.

Dying was a moment away when the scream came and light flooded the room. The hand was withdrawn from my mouth, the weight lifted from my body, and I lay gasping and blinking.

Miles and miles away there was shouting, and then Inspector Hack's roar was jet-propelled into my consciousness, and I struggled and sat up and could see across the room to the wide-open door where the sergeant stood with a gun in one hand and the limp body of a fainting Celeste in the other.

OFTEN I have tried to remember exactly what it was that the inspector cried as he stood by the wardrobe, gun trained on Franklyn. I think it was, "Put that woman down!" or something equally ridiculous. I slid from the bed on the farther side and stood, trembling, watching Sergeant Craydon carry the unconscious Celeste across the room and set her in the place I had vacated.

Without looking at me Hack called, "You all right, miss?"

I think I said yes. In any case it was sufficient to bring Franklyn's baleful eyes upon me. For a moment he stared in hostile silence, and then his lip curled. "It looks as if I've backed another loser," he said. He was white and shaken, and, though he continued to smile at me, there was a craftiness in his eyes.

I cried a warning, "Watch his hand."

The sergeant swung about. I don't know what he did with his gun, but Franklyn uttered a yelp and his right hand dropped, twitching. Inspector Hack had closed in so that his threatening gun was now no more than a couple of feet away. The sergeant dipped into Franklyn's inside coat pocket and brought out the long envelope.

"Cynthia Warren. Will," he read, and the inspector grunted as he took charge of it. The sergeant tried a side pocket and pulled out a cord and dangled it by one extremity, and I saw that the other end had been looped into a slip-knot. I couldn't have sworn that it was not the same cord the police had produced at David's trial.

Inspector Hack stretched his free hand and inspected it with interest. "That was meant for you, Miss Winsor," he said. "Try his other pocket."

Silently the sergeant held up a second cord.

Inspector Hack was visibly shaken. "Two! And he knew there were two women in the house!"

Franklyn was pulling the fingers of his hurt hand. His laugh was bitter. "Winsor," he said. "Melita Winsor. You were David's playmate as a kid." He laughed with the same lack of humor. "Can you beat it?" he asked. "Melita Winsor! Melanie Winter! It's strange."

He stood nursing his hand as the inspector began stowing the cords in his side pocket while Sergeant Craydon, concluding his search, allowed his lover's eyes to stray to the inert figure on the bed.

In that instant Franklyn acted, striking hard at the sergeant's wrist so that the gun fell and slithered under the bed. Almost simultaneously the bedside table and lamp had been hurled at Hack. I heard a shattering explosion and saw the dressing-table mirror splinter.

Before the inspector could recover balance, Craydon had grabbed his gun and leapt into the corridor after Franklyn, and I was in the corridor, flicking the electric switch. The first thing I saw from the stairhead was Franklyn's back and then I was looking down into the startled face of Hildegard.

She was staring up, a lighted candle—useless now all lights were on—in one hand, the other holding to the railing. For the merest fraction of time the picture held, then she was hurled downward by Franklyn's flying form.

Craydon had reached the halfway landing when the inspector passed me, cursing under his breath. I followed part way down the stairs to where I could see Craydon at the bottom of the steps, his gun extended. A report came and a crash. The sergeant fired again and then ran forward, and I could see him no more.

The inspector, reaching the floor level, stared toward the front door but made no move to follow the sergeant. He thrust his gun into his side pocket and stooped to examine the crumpled Hildegard. A police whistle blew shrilly and there was the sound of running feet and the tramp of heavy boots on the verandah.

I heard Hack bawling for someone to telephone a doctor, and I fled upstairs, thinking of Celeste.

She was still lying on the bed, but opened a cautious eye as I entered.

"What's cooking?" she asked and explained, "I thought I heard someone in the corridor and panicked. I started in here for company and ran slap into a man waiting in the dark. I screamed and passed out. When I came to a war had started." She was interested and curious.

"What's that Melanie Winter stuff?" she asked, and I knew she had found politic to pretend her fainting fit had endured longer than we imagined. Her eyes narrowed. "You wouldn't be a female cop?"

"No. I'm really Melita Winsor," I said.

"And nice and pally with Inspector Hack?"

"There's nothing for you to worry about, Celeste," I assured her. "All you need do at the moment is think up an excuse for not telling your sergeant you'd changed your place of abode. He didn't know you were here. He must have been surprised to run into you in the dark."

From below the inspector was calling me and I said, hastily, "I've got to go. I'll tell the inspector how you got frightened and say you're resting."

She said, "I'm oyster till I have the whole book of words."

Hack was waiting for me in the company of a uniformed person he introduced as Policewoman O'Grady and who, I gathered, had been brought along to supply the feminine touch in case it was needed after my experience with Franklyn. Now she had no for Hildegard, who had been taken to Mrs. Glass' bedroom on the ground floor.

"The old girl raised the deuce, but I couldn't accept the responsibility of moving her upstairs," Hack said.

In Hildegard's room I found a flannel nightie and with this and a few odds and ends I thought might be useful, Mrs. O'Grady went off. The inspector explained apologetically that she would be going off duty, and that the doctor had been delayed by some minor traffic accident.

He suggested I get Celeste down, but when I told him she'd taken a sedative he agreed that I should attend to Hildegard's wants. He was, however, obviously ill at ease.

"Regarding Greene, miss," he said at length. "I think you're going to be disappointed. You see, he made no confession regarding Mrs. Glass' murder."

"Oh, but he will," I cried impetuously.

He regarded me sombrely. "Greene is dead, miss," he said.

I was shocked by the news and abruptness of the announcement but horror was swamped by disappointment as I listened.

"You mustn't blame young Craydon," Hack said. "He called on Greene to stop and fired low, but Greene stumbled over that casket thing and the bullet took him in the wrong place. When he realised he was for it he admitted he'd come here to get rid of 'old Cyn' and 'the Melanie kid.' I'm using his words, miss. I asked him about Mrs. Glass, but he denied he'd killed her. His actual words were —" He referred to a note-book. "'Auntie was David's pigeon.'"

"Oh, no—" I covered my face with my hands.

"Now, miss, you've been brave," the inspector said. "I've known dying people make some pretty spiteful statements. Evidence might yet tot up against Greene."

The rest of the story was not pleasant hearing. Franklyn had been delirious and was shouting names. My assumed one, Melanie Winter, Cynthia Warren's, too.

I shut my eyes on the imagined scene as Policewoman O'Grady came from the room to which they'd taken Hildegard.

"She wants to go to her own room," she said, "but that's out of the question. Perhaps if someone she knows talks to her . . ."

"I'll go in," I promised but I was sick with disappointment as I went.

Hildegard was lying on her back, her pudgy face waxen except where a purpling bruise ran from below her left eye to her temple. She watched me with the suspicious wariness of a sick and cornered cat as I told her how sorry I was she had had an accident.

"You bain no more sorry than I," she said ungraciously. "The idea! While I'm half dead with the fall, dragging the clothes from me and setting me in the poor soul's bed. I bain go up to my own room. Come now, miss. You bain strong. Lend a hand." She tried to raise herself, but the effort was too much for her, and she fell back on the pillow.

"I bain fixed good and proper this time," she admitted and, closing her eyes, clamped sullen lips, lying so long in brooding silence I hoped she'd fallen asleep. But her mind had been active, and presently she was making cajoling gestures.

"You bain a decent lass," she said with transparent flattery. "You bain trustworthy, anyone can see." She tugged my sleeve, inviting closer conference. "I got something upstairs, miss. I want none but my old eyes to see."

I fancied she was referring to the money, but her next whisper cancelled the guess.

your hand down and you'll find it wrapped in an old singlet. You be a nice lass and nip up and bring it."

Actually I wasn't thinking of her peace of mind at all when I decided to accede to her whim. What could be in her suitcase so important she set it above the considerable amount of money she guarded so carelessly? When I reached her room the light was on and everything, apparently, as I had left it, the battered suitcase still resting on the chair. I assured myself the money in the dressing-table drawer hadn't been disturbed, then lifted the lid of the case.

It had been haphazardly packed with minor articles of clothing, and, in addition to trifling odds and ends there were a few pieces of paper-money of high value. I thrust my hand down and found the object Hildegard had described. Tremulous on the eve of discovery, I unwound the capped woollen covering to reveal a tarnished silver frame with a photograph of a young man.

His eyes were keen, his chin jutted confidently, but, from the dated collar, I surmised the picture had been made before I was born. And yet the face was familiar.

I had no time for reflection, however, because a hand reached from behind and took the photo-frame and, over my shoulder, Inspector Hack said, "Who is it?" All evening he had been moving about on his rubber soles and had forgotten that a silent approach could be frightening.

"One of my men tipped me off someone had run upstairs." He tapped the portrait. "Who's the owner of this pretty thing? The cook?"

"Yes. She asked me to get it."

"I should know this bird," he said, ruminating, and turned the frame over so that the light fell directly on something written in a clumsy hand on the cardboard back. "Your eyes are better than mine, miss," he said and held the thing for me to read.

I read the faded words. "'Clan Morgan, aged 23'."

"Clanmorgan! So it is! Clanmorgan as a young man! Now what d'you suppose the old dear wants with his picture?"

Racing through my mind was the phrase David had scribbled to Claudine. How strange to think that all this began with the cook. David—Claudine — Clanmorgan — Hildegard — Mrs. Glass. The trail was surely there for me to follow. I began wrapping the photograph in the lining saying I would take it downstairs, but with so much eagerness that Inspector Hack observed me with some curiosity.

"There's no hurry, miss," he said. "The doctor's with the old lady." His palm rasped his chin thoughtfully. "Clan Morgan. And the cook's name is Hulda Morgan. That's the name under which she testified at Curtis' trial. She never figured in the Clanmorgan inquest. Well you never know, do you? There've been plenty of rumors that Clanmorgan wasn't his real name. But he was rich as blazes. The cook must be a poor relation."

Hildegard had visited Mrs. Glass a short time before David had heated words with her. It wouldn't help him if the inspector, by questioning the cook, linked him with Clanmorgan's wife. I said, "Perhaps the doctor needs me," and added something foolishly formal about excusing me and left with the wrapped photograph, so palpably confused I am sure he was puzzled.

The doctor had eased Hildegard, and she was drowsing as I entered the room. Astonishingly none of her bones had been broken. She'd plenty of natural fat to cushion the fall, and I rather guessed plenty of petticoats. "But she's no chicken," the doctor warned.

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TWO-PART NOVEL

...an accident like that can ...ecuse in one of her age ...d similar condition."

He shook hands perfunctorily, ...ling me she should have ...ee and rest and, giving me ...w simple instructions, ...ared to return in the ...ning forgetting that it was ...ually 5 a.m. He told me he ...ld advise Inspector Hack ...t Hildegard shouldn't be ...ed for a while, and I ...e grateful to him for that.

I stepped the photograph ...der the second pillow of ...ildegard's bed and, seeking ...e inspector told him I would ...end the rest of the night ...h the old lady. He said it ...s thoughtful of me and had ...n carry a sofa from the ...ller and followed himself ...h a triple-sided Japanese ...een, explaining that it would ...t me from the bed and give ...e privacy.

After I'd assured him I'd ...e all right I accompanied ...n to the front door. I had ...t closed it behind him when ...e telephone rang. It was Dr. ...llershaw who had heard of ...anklyn's death and said he ...s coming out. I begged him ...wait a few hours, assuring ...n there was nothing to worry ...ut.

"Before you go I want you ...hear some good news," he ...d. "Dr. Grostock phoned ...e urgently asking me to see ...lland, and I went out at once. ...There's an amazing change, the ...ult, I am sure, of telling ...m what happened regarding ...s Clanmorgan. He's re...ssured mentally. He says he has ...always known that Mrs. Glass ...s dead but remembers nothing ...tantly from the time a ...nderman shook a cord in his ...ce and aroused him."

"But then — he won't re...member me," I faltered.

"Oh, but he does," Dr. ...llershaw said. "He's only con...cerned about the trial. He re...members you talking about the ...Guzellini I left with him. He ...wants to see you." He added, "I am not exaggerating when I ...ay he is very keen to see ...u."

It should have been the ...atest news, but what had I ...e to tell David? What had my ...asterish efforts accom...plished? I was too tired to ...nk Hildegard seemed to be ...eeping, and I put out the ...ght and threw myself on the ...ed.

When I awoke it was broad ...daylight, and Celeste was ...anding beside me, fresh as ...a daisy, holding a cup of tea. "The places you hide your...self!" she said and nodded past ...e screen. "Tug Boat Annie's ...been asking for you."

I explained briefly how Hil...degard came to be there and ...ld her more of what had ...happened.

When she had gone I set ...y tea to cool and took a look ...t Hildegard. She had raised ...herself to rest on an elbow ...nd, with her free hand, was ...reaching like a clutching miser. "You got it?" she demanded. "Where is it? Quick, now."

I leaned over her pillow and took the silver photo-frame from beneath the far pillow and the tore at the woollen wrapping. I think she was oblivious of my presence while she held the picture before her eyes, then hugged it to her breast.

There was a brisk knocking at the front door, and I found Sergeant Craydon smiling on the mat. "Good morning, miss," he said and lied bravely. "I'm off duty and I thought I'd enquire how you were after your nasty experience."

I told him I'd had nothing to worry about while he and the inspector were so handy and, to put him at ease, added that I rather thought Celeste was expecting him.

"Celeste?" He grinned. "Oh, you mean Celia?"

"She'll always be Celeste to me," I said as he followed me down the hall. I waved him kitchenward and returned to Hildegard. She had been awaiting my return with impatience, for she said at once, "Now I bain getting up and going to my own room."

There could be no question of moving her, I told her, but she waved argument aside. "I bain going up," she said stubbornly. "You and that Celeste can help me. It bain wicked to keep me in the poor soul's bed."

"Come, I'll bathe your face," I said. I turned on the hot tap and found a fresh towel.

Looking at me, she said with sly inference, "I bain have some money upstairs. Now you be a sensible lass. Get Celeste and help me out of this. Come now."

"That reminds me, Hildegard," I said, sponging professionally. "When you sent me to get the photo I saw some money loose in the suitcase." I was thinking especially of the notes in the drawer. "Shouldn't you put them in a bank?"

"No banks." The words were snapped out and I knew I had touched some secret spring. She went on, though she spoke as if her mind was elsewhere. "'No banks,' he said. 'Keep the money to yourself and there'll be no fuss.'"

"He" was Clanmorgan, I guessed, and was glad to see her responding to the refreshing sponging. Now that the armor of her reticence had been so unexpectedly pierced, I hoped she would continue to talk. Drying her cheeks, I spoke as though I was aware of her relationship with Clanmorgan, as though indeed she had confided in me.

"Clan was very handsome as a young man," I said.

She chose to resent such restricted praise. "He was handsome till the day of his death," she said. "Even with his face twisted with the trouble and pain Curtis set upon him."

Ashamed of my cunning, I said, "I didn't think Curtis would bring trouble to anyone," and became the impersonal nurse. "Now, just let go Clan's photo while I wash your hands."

She surrendered them without protest. "Curtis was after her!" she said. "Her name was Claudine. As soon as I set eyes on her I bain know Clan had wed wrong. They bain poles apart, but he was always one for flying high."

She went on to tell me how she'd stumbled on them in a cafe. "'Twere not the place for my son's wife who could afford the best," she said. "But there they were, heads close together, whispering. Laughing even. It bain strange, I thought, and knew 'twere wrong and, after that, when she went out I followed."

She had discovered that Claudine was going with some regularity to a building where David had his studio, and it had been in her mind to take the news to her son.

"But always I bain scared of Clan's temper," she said. "And in that fine house 'twere hard to see him. Like getting in to see the king in his castle. Him the boss and me the cook."

She noted my surprise and went quickly on, "Oh, he'd grown too grand for me. He'd left the old town where he'd lived all his life, and, with only five shillings in his pocket, started out to conquer the world. That were twenty years and more ago, and soon he was too busy to remember me. Only a card at Christmas with compliments. Then no cards. It got very lonely, and then I could stand it no more. I bain come here to be near him in my last years."

He had been annoyed but had permitted her to stay. He told her he couldn't have her shaming him in front of his friends, and had put her to work in his kitchen. Clanmorgan was dead, but at the moment I hated him.

I asked whether Claudine had known she was Clanmorgan's mother.

"No one knew," she told me. "Twouldn't have done, miss, dear. No, she'd come to the kitchen sometimes, nice as pie. 'You remind me of someone, Hulda,' she'd say in that grand way of hers. 'You puzzle me!' But I never spoke back."

Then from her lips came corroboration of the thing David had said. Claudine, leaving the studio, had seen the old woman waiting on the kerb and had realised she was being watched.

Hildegard said, "She'd had her chance. I bain praying she'd give Curtis the go-by. But next day she went again, and I lay wakeful o' nights with the worry knowing Clan should hear of it but feared to tell him. And then someone wrote him a letter. There bain no name to the end of it, but it said Curtis had stolen Clan's wife."

Clanmorgan had been in the garage when the letter was brought to him, and, when he read it, he went into the house and up the stairs to Claudine's sitting-room. He had the letter in one hand. He was probably unaware he was carrying the steel spanner in the other.

According to Hildegard, he demanded to know about David, and there were hot words.

"She showed plain as plain she was setting the man higher than him who'd given her everything," the old woman said. "Curtis had bedevilled her, miss. In the end Clan struck her with the spanner, and, when he struck once, he had to strike again. He was terrible in temper, poor Clan."

"Poor Clan," I murmured. That was what she wanted me to say.

There had been no one but Claudine and her husband upstairs, and, after a while, he went down to the servants' quarters and told them he and his wife had been called away suddenly and that the house would be closed. He told them they could take holidays and paid them and said they were to go at once. They wondered a bit, but Clanmorgan was a man of sudden decisions, and no one suspected.

"Then, like when he was a boy and things got beyond him and he came running to his mother, he told me the terrible trouble he was in," Hildegard said. "He bain put his poor head on my breast for the first time for so many years 'twere hard to remember back. And I knew 'twould be the last time."

They'd sat there a long time, then he'd got up, saying there were things to be done, and took money from his desk and some from his pockets and gave it to her, explaining he'd always figured she would die first and there was nothing coming to her from his will and no time to draw another.

He had either to stay and stand trial, run away, or kill himself. He shrank from the first alternative, and he couldn't run away. "Not Clan," Hildegard said. Not Clan, who'd fought every lad his size, and some bigger, in the town where he was born. But he wasn't going to let David off. David loved Claudine and soon would learn she was foully dead, but that was not punishment enough.

I listened with growing horror as Hildegard told me how he had planned to kill himself and take David with him. It was very clever, she thought. "He'd trick Curtis to call on Claudine," she said. "Then, in his great aeroplane, he'd dive straight at the room where they'd be—her dead but him alive. It were fixed for eight o'clock."

"Hildegard — you knew? Surely you could have done something?" I cried

"'Twere that way or Clan on the run," she said.

"But David? He might have been killed!"

"And why not? she demanded with sudden savagery. "His was the blame for ruining Clan's life. His for bringing on Claudine's death. As sure as God made little apples, miss, his was the blame."

I caught my breath at the phrase. The exact words she had used when we stood at the top of the stairs on my first night at Warriewood. Only then I had thought she was blaming David for Mrs. Glass' death.

I couldn't speak and moved from her as Celeste appeared with a breakfast tray. She glanced at the food she'd brought. "Isn't my invalid cooking a scream?" she said.

I asked her to attend to the patient. I needed fresh air and walked quickly up the hall and through the front door, but there was a threatening sky and a heaviness in the atmosphere, and I went no further than the verandah. I couldn't rid myself of the picture of the old woman waiting for the inevitable end that was to bring with it a dreadful vengeance.

How did she occupy herself in those waiting moments? Did she pray? Could she pray, knowing her son's dread purpose? Knowing David was to die? And, since he had miraculously escaped Clanmorgan's plane, had he ever been safe from Clanmorgan's mother?

Hildegard had worked for Mrs. Glass only three weeks, she'd testified. But the court hadn't been told that Celeste had shown her the cord which had been inadvertently brought from David's room. The court had been unaware that Celeste had gruesomely demonstrated how a person might be strangled with it.

The court didn't know that Hildegard hated David. And David's whole attitude had contributed to this old woman's wicked purpose. Dr. Ellershaw was right. If it hadn't been for me David's association with Claudine would still be bottled up in his secret heart.

I HURRIED back along the hall, filled with growing dread, for, as I alone had heard from David's lips the story of Clanmorgan's tragedy, so I alone knew Hildegard's secret. To save David one secret would have to be linked with the other and on my unsupported testimony. If Hildegard chose to deny, who would believe me?

As I reached Hildegard's room I heard the crash of breaking crockery and looked in to see Celeste's breakfast tray lying on the floor, food splattered over the carpet, and Hildegard slumping, one mottled leg already dangling over the side of the bed. I ran across the room and lifted her back, and she collapsed against the pillows, exhausted and whimpering.

"Can you beat it?" Celeste said. "She flung the tray at me. And all I said was, 'It's like old times. I can see old Mrs. Glass sitting in the bed.'"

Hildegard's agitation gradually subsided, and it seemed to me she had sunk into a coma. I rang the doctor. He was already on his rounds, but I was promised an attempt would be made to intercept him. He had spoken of Hildegard's cardiac condition. If, as I believed possible, she should die without saying anything further, David's position would be dire indeed.

When I got back to the room Celeste had cleared up the mess and offered to stay on while I had a bite to eat in the kitchen. I protested that I didn't feel like eating, and she said, "After all that's happened here, let's not have anyone starving to death. Besides, the future Commissioner of Police wants a word with you."

I knew by her tone she was well aware of what Sergeant Craydon was going to tell me, so I took the tray with the broken crockery and went to the kitchen. He came directly to the point.

"I've been talking to Celia —er Celeste, miss," he said, "and cleared up a point in the Curtis case. You must understand, miss, Celia really thought—thinks that Curtis is not quite right here." He tapped his handsome head.

I felt he was sympathetic toward me, but I was impatient with his desire to protect Celeste.

"You see, she was never asked in the witness box about the words Franklyn said he heard," he went on. "Curtis didn't deny them, if you remember." He pulled out a notebook and snapped back the elastic.

"She says that she heard Curtis talking as though to someone in his room. He'd often done it, she says. He would carry on childish conversation with someone called Peter. She could never be sure whether he was talking in his sleep.

"On the night in question she remembers a conversation between Curtis and this Peter. They were talking about a cat —kitten, rather. It went on and on, she says, and then as if someone—this invisible Peter I suppose—was answering although, if you can understand, it was still David speaking and he was saying, 'Don't you see, Davy, we've got to use the slip-knot.' The very words, miss, which Franklyn Greene alleged he heard.

"After that she heard Curtis say, 'Oh, but that would hurt her.' It made her very frightened when the butcher boy put it round her neck and Hobbs laughed."

No one could accuse Celeste of inventing that. She would hardly know the name of a butler employed by Mrs. Glass so many years ago. The sergeant was closing his note-book. "You see, miss, that puts a very different construction on the words Franklyn Greene heard."

Approached in any other way I felt sure Celeste would have been chary about leaving herself open to a charge of withholding evidence, but I realised that the words she had divulged did no more than make the case against David less strong. I asked the sergeant whether Celeste could identify the person she saw in David's room in the middle of the night.

"You have to remember she had no reason for thinking anything sinister was afoot, so the person made no great impression on her mind," he said.

"But she would know if it was man or woman."

"Not under the circumstances, miss. All she can say is the person wore a dressing gown."

It was plain he had no more to impart, and I hurriedly finished my tea and toast and, thanking the sergeant, went back into the hall, which was almost dark, for the weather was deteriorating fast. The open front door was no more than a grey rectangle at the end of a gloomy tunnel, and then this meagre light was partially blotted out by the figure of Inspector Hack. I saw him as a sort of comic cut-out, shaking the rain from his bowler, then heard his call, asking might he enter and, to my relief, telling me he'd brought Dr. Ellershaw.

I told him Sergeant Craydon was in the kitchen and had something to tell him and, alone with Dr. Ellershaw, poured out the story of Clanmorgan's death and the part Hildegard had played, trying to be coherent but in the murky hall, to the accompaniment of flickers of lightning, even in my ears it sounded fantastic, and I could well believe the doctor thinking I was suffering from overwrought nerves.

"Hildegard hated David," I concluded passionately. "Don't you see, Doctor? She killed Mrs. Glass knowing he'd be blamed. And now she's dying."

He said calmly, "That at least we can verify."

Hildegard mumbled feeble protest as he took her hand. He asked Celeste to switch on the light because the room had darkened with the mounting storm, and Hildegard opened her eyes and saw me and beckoned. She seemed unconscious of the presence of others, and I put my ear to her lips.

"Get me out of here," she whispered. "Get me out, miss, dear. There's money. Lots and lots upstairs."

A lightning flash made the electric globe flicker, and the thunder came in a horrid crackle. Celeste put her hands to her ears, and Hildegard clutched my arm.

"I bain frightened of it all my born days," she whimpered. "'Tis the voice of God."

Another flash preceded a crackle that sizzled along the rooftop, and she buried her face in my bosom. I whispered to Dr. Ellershaw, "She's terrified. She wants to get out of here."

"The storm will sound as badly anywhere," he said. He had come to see me and was not equipped to give any relief to Hildegard. When I told him the doctor would arrive at any minute he looked relieved. We left Celeste in charge and tip-toed out. "She's in bad shape," he told me. "But as long as she lies quietly . . ."

"But that's just it," I cried as Inspector Hack joined us in the hall. "The moment she feels strong enough she'll try to get out of that bed."

"Why?" Hack asked. "It's a good bed."

"It's the bed in which she strangled Mrs. Glass," I said.

A silence fell, and I found my fingernails biting into my palms. The inspector was observing me with pitying tolerance. Here was one, he was thinking, prepared to go to any length to support a warped judgment.

Dr. Ellershaw came to my rescue. "Hildegard's in a serious condition. It is for you, Hack, to decide whether she should be questioned."

"You suggest she's dying?" Hack asked bluntly.

"She may linger quite a while, but, if what Miss Winsor says is right, it is understandable that she should want to leave the bed," Ellershaw told him. "She may even make the attempt herself and go out like a candle."

The inspector said dryly, "The old girl was a witness at Curtis' trial. She swore she knew nothing."

Behind him I saw Celeste beckoning. "She's asking for you, Mel."

I was too much on edge to be fair, too hysterical to remember the inspector had neither knowledge of Clanmorgan's attempt to kill David nor Hildegard's passive participation.

"All right, I'll go and listen to her," I said wildly, "but supposing she's dying and confesses she killed Mrs. Glass? Will any of you believe me? You'll say I'm prejudiced. Lying, perhaps."

Dr. Ellershaw calmed me as usual. "I'm sure Hack is sympathetic," he said.

The inspector looked uncomfortable. "I'm ready to listen in to anything the old lady says, miss, if that's what you mean," he said, and suggested he could wait behind the screen.

While Dr. Ellershaw went to use the phone he followed me to the door of Hildegard's room. I shifted the screen, making some excuse about a draught and permitting him to enter unseen. The violence of the storm had diminished, but the

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THE CURIOUS CRIME

air was heavy and oppressive, and I felt we had not heard the last of it.

"The storm's passing, Hildegard." I tried to make my voice friendly. She groped for my hand and pulled it to her.

"You bain a nice person," she said. "When you're by, I bain less feared."

"Why should you be afraid?"

Her gaze shifted uneasily. "The thunder . . ."

"It's more than the thunder, Hildegard," I said firmly, and she shot me a suspicious glance. I went on, "You're a sick woman and surely realise it is better to remain where you are. Why then are you so anxious to get out of this bed?"

She stared above her, and a tear rolled down her puffed cheek. My hopes that she would speak were high. I said quietly, "You've told me so much, Hildegard. Isn't there something more? About Mrs. Glass?" And when no response came, "Wouldn't it help to tell?"

She was so still the terrifying thought came that she was dead. Then I saw that her eyes were watchful as a snake's. It should have warned me, but I had to know. I said, "You killed Mrs. Glass, didn't you, Hildegard?"

Her head flung toward me in a movement so sudden and savage I shrank from the blazing menace. "David Curtis killed her," she flared. "Curtis, d'you hear? The fellow you think so dandy. Oh, you bain fooling me with your soft ways, sticking your nose in. Well, 'twas Curtis who came down in the night and strangled her and dipped his slippers in her powder and dropped them from his window. And soon they'll say he's guilty and hang him high . . ."

The crescendo of hatred reached, she fell back, gasping, and I believed she was dying with that accusation on her lips.

Inspector Hack said, "Well, that's that! Better leave her be, miss," and I was so overwhelmed I was only vaguely aware that the doctor I had spoken with a few hours earlier had hurried in and was bending over the bed.

Celeste had been listening at the door, and I fell into her arms while she patted and petted and assured me everything would come right, coaxing me to the kitchen, where Sergeant Craydon hurriedly set a chair. Dr. Ellershaw followed with the news that the inspector had gone off to keep an appointment but would be contacting me.

"Doctor, did you hear what she said?" I cried. "Did you hear what that terrible old woman said?"

He nodded gloomily, and Celeste said, "She was just rubbing it in, kid. You accused her of doing the old madam in, so she came back at you." She told us how Hildegard had joined the household in response to an advertisement, and Mrs. Glass had personally engaged her. "The old thing had Curtis set from the first day," she added, and Dr. Ellershaw asked her was she sure of that.

"He got on her nerves," Celeste explained. "Franklyn was joking with her almost from the first minute, but Curtis didn't realise she was on the earth. I suppose it got her back up. I remember her, all het up one morning, saying, 'A dose of arsenic would do him good.' "

Dr. Ellershaw asked, "She said it openly? You didn't really think she meant it?"

"I thought she had the grumps," Celeste said. "It didn't mean a thing. It was like when you say you'd like to wring someone's neck."

I said, "But you don't know everything, Celeste. Hildegard is the mother of that man Clanmorgan who killed his wife!"

"Well, what do you know?" she exclaimed, astonished. "But, Clanmorgan's mother! Working here as a cook! Why, he could buy the mint. It doesn't make sense."

I told her of the sequel to the killing of Claudine, and she listened, wide-eyed. "The old witch," she said when she had the whole story. "That puts a different lid on the jam-pot, doesn't it? What do you say, Commissioner?"

The sergeant grinned good-humoredly and Celeste went on, "You'd better get your thinking cap on. If I were you the first thing I'd ask is what happened to the cord I brought from David's room after I showed Hildegard and Cynthia one of the things you could do with it. I left it in the kitchen. Cynthia had gone upstairs, but Hildegard was still there. After that I forgot all about it."

"Nothing was said about that at the trial," Craydon objected.

"Because it was cut and dried to hang Curtis," Celeste retorted. "Everybody overlooked things. No one's really done anything but Melita." Her brow puckered, and, ready to grasp at any straw, I asked eagerly if she'd something else on her mind.

She said, "I've been thinking about the person I saw in David's room. It could have been Hildegard."

"That won't do, Celia," Dan Craydon said promptly. "They'd say you never dreamed it could be her until she was charged."

"Well there's something more important," Celeste said stubbornly. She looked at Dr. Ellershaw. "You must have heard it. You were at the door when the old girl was screaming her head off at Melita."

"I heard her accuse David as I came from the phone," the doctor admitted.

Celeste said, "You heard her accuse herself. Now listen. Hildegard said David strangled madam and dipped his slippers in her powder. Dipped. Doesn't that get you? Doesn't it show what was actually in her mind? If David came down like she said he wouldn't dip his slippers in the powder. He'd step in it. Why did she use that word dipped? I'll tell you why. Because she was thinking of what really happened.

"She brought David's slippers into that room herself and she dipped them in the powder she'd already spilled on the carpet. It wasn't there when I said good-night. Cynthia said nothing about it, and I'll stake my life Mrs. Glass didn't open the powder box herself. Any powdering she needed I attended to."

Dr. Ellershaw was listening with interest, the sergeant with open admiration, and I was grateful that she seemed so wholeheartedly my ally.

A cough at the door announced that the doctor had come from the sick room. Ellershaw went to him, and they walked out together. I knew the message he'd relay. "Absolute quiet for the patient." If those orders were obeyed we might never get anything out of Hildegard.

Celeste said suddenly: "I've an idea, Mel; while I'm away, tell the Sarge how nice I am. I won't be a jiff."

She was away barely long enough for Craydon to say he'd told her how I waited in Cynthia's bed. She offered no explanation other than to say she thought Hildegard was dozing. Then she said, "I know exactly what that old buzzard thinks of me, and I'm going in to talk turkey to her. You two come and listen."

I followed her, expectant and excited, with the sergeant on our heels. The Japanese screen hid us from Hildegard. Celeste thumbed me to the sofa and whispered to Craydon to squat by the door. Then it was as if she were playing a part and waiting for her cue to make an entrance.

She smoothed her hips, and under her breath she said, "Well, here we go." She stepped into the room. Hildegard's eyes must have been closed, because Celeste's first words were hissingly insistent. "Hildegard, wake. I've come to warn you. The police know you're Clanmorgan's mother."

"That blonde Jezebel. She told them," the old woman said.

"Never mind who told who," Celeste said. "They're on to you about Mrs. Glass. They say you killed her."

There was a brief pause, then Hildegard spoke with deliberation. "Curtis killed her."

"No he didn't, you old liar," Celeste accused. "Don't waste time hating people. Think of your neck. I don't care about Curtis nor the Winsor kid nor even you. I think about myself first, last, and all the time, and I wouldn't be doing this if you weren't the mother of a rich man and could buy what I could tell the cops."

When no response came she carried on urgently. "Every minute you hold out you're tightening the rope about your neck. Listen, you old goat, you're so deep in the soup I'm the only one who can pull you out. I needn't say I saw you in Curtis' room, dropping his slippers from the window."

I COULD imagine Celeste almost shaking Hildegard in her desperate impatience. "Don't you understand, you old fool? They'll put two and two together about you and your son and what you tried to do to Curtis before. They know you killed Mrs. Glass, and they'll find the proof right there on the bedside table where it's been for all the world to see since the night Mrs. Glass died. Right there where you left it after strangling her."

I expected Hildegard's quick disclaimer, but all she said was, "You bain talking foolish."

"Oh, no," Celeste persisted. "The proof is on the box from which you spilled the powder before you dipped Curtis' slippers into the mess. It'll be just dandy for Inspector Hack to find your prints on it." She paused to let it sink in, and then her voice dropped a note to become slyly insinuating. "I could wipe the prints off, Hildegard."

The old woman was silent and I wondered whether she was laughing to herself. Perhaps there were no prints on the box. Perhaps long ago she had rubbed them off. Hopefully my mind suggested that, in the stress and urgency of that dreadful night, she might have overlooked them. And, after the murder, as Celeste had suggested, it had all seemed cut and dried for the conviction of David. No one was thinking of a cook who had been in the house only three weeks.

"You stubborn old goat," Celeste cried at length. "You can't have all day to make up your mind. Can't you get it? The police may be here any minute."

Hildegard's voice came then with the hint of craftiness and cajolery she had used in trying to bribe me to get her out of the bed. "I got money upstairs, Celeste," she said. "It's in the dressing-table drawer. It bain more than you'd see in dreams, Celeste."

Celeste's response was prompt. "I'll run up," she said and for an instant I was filled with misgiving. I knew what a temptation the sight of so much easily negotiable money would be to one of her acquisitiveness.

"You bain bring it down," Hildegard said. "Then we'll talk." She added a warning. "I bain know just how much is there." That was improbable. No one could tumble money about in that way and retain a strict accounting. But Celeste was not to know this. She said, "O.K., gran', but I'll make you pay more for not trusting me."

"Watch her," she said as she came behind the screen, and I heard her steps as she ran up the stairs. The sergeant's eyes were sparkling as he moved to the screen and, stooping, applied them to one of the apertures between the panels. I joined him and we stood, sleeves touching.

Hildegard was on her back, Clanmorgan's picture between the hands resting on her breast, her head sideways and back toward the bedside table on which now, for the first time, I noticed a round powder box beside the lamp. One of her arms moved feebly, working at right angles as her hand felt for the box beyond her reach. We could hear her labored breathing as she levered her body nearer the edge of the bed.

Her fingers clawed blindly, but it was some time before she contacted the overhang of the crocheted lace cover and dragged it so that the lamp trembled and a medicine bottle toppled. Her face was contorted with the agony of effort, and I made an involuntary movement of apprehension. The sergeant's grip closed on my arm in warning pressure.

Hildegard's hand lost contact with the lace cover and her arm dangled over the side of the bed as though she had no strength left. The silence became almost unendurable before her dangling hand twitched. The fingers curled and the hand came painfully up till she was once more clutching the table cover. Then she was gathering more and more of the lace into her palm. A glass on the table moved in spasmodic jerks, reached the edge and fell. The lace cover was now all askew, but her hand had found a resting place, and I heard her sigh of relief.

Presently she began tugging at the cloth again. The lamp came abreast her hand and balanced crazily on the table edge; but her fingers now touched the powder box and she began to lever it towards her and her eyes slued up and round so that she could probably see a little of what she was accomplishing, but her breathing was terrible to hear as she made the final effort, clawing at the box, edging it nearer so that at length her fingers curved round it, and, with a last desperate scooping, she swept it towards her.

The lamp crashed but the powder box fell on the bed near Clanmorgan's photograph. For the moment she had no more strength, but there was still something to be done.

Now, surely, I thought, we should act, but the sergeant did not move. Only when Hildegard gathered some of the sheet in her hand and reached for the box, and it was obvious that she was going to wipe it clean, did he spring, and then so quickly that the screen toppled. With delicate fingers he whipped the powder box from the bed and set it on the distant dressing-table.

Dr. Ellershaw appeared at the door. He looked surprised and startled and hurried to the bedside, where, stooping, he picked up the little medicine bottle from the floor. He shook a tablet into his palm and held the palm against Hildegard's mouth. A gust of wind sent the rain in a sharp spatter against the window. I went to close it but shrank from a flash of lightning so vivid and jagged I whirled about.

Hildegard was feebly rejecting the sustaining tablet, and, when the thunder came, her hands jerked from the photograph of Clanmorgan and clutched Dr. Ellershaw's wrist. I believe, at that moment, the immediate terror of the storm had driven every other thought from her mind, and, as the second clap came, she winced and whimpered.

The sergeant and I bent to hear. "'Tis God's voice," she was murmuring. "'Tis your voice, God, and I bain humble and obedient. I bain a vain old woman."

I dreaded the thunder would come again and drown her words. Yet it was fear of the supernatural alone that was inspiring her to a confession that was also a plea.

"The poor soul was going to die, God. You know that. 'Tweren't like taking a life that's to be lived. 'Don't be afraid,' I told her. 'You bain going to God a little earlier, that's all.' " Sergeant Craydon was getting it all in his notebook, I knew, for she was speaking haltingly, thinking of the past and dreading the future.

"I bain wicked and deceptive, God. 'I bain going to help you,' I said, and lifted her up and dropped the cord about her poor neck. 'Twere no more than a minute, God, and she was gone to you, and I left the cord where 'twas and spilled the powder and dipped the soles of his slippers in, and then I bain drop them from his window and go to bed. 'Twere a quick passing for her, Lord, and Curtis bain a wicked man as my son will tell you."

As though to jog her memory the thunder crackled sharply, and she roused again. "I bain kill the poor soul, God, and I knew Curtis would get the blame. I bain vainglorious. I bain setting myself up as judge. Vengeance is Thine, Lord—all Thine."

Dr. Ellershaw touched me on the shoulder. "That's all you'll get just now," he said. "Leave her with me."

We tiptoed out, and, in the kitchen, Dan Craydon said, "That clinches it," and read Hildegard's confession. "Even without the fingerprints on this." He nodded at the powder box he'd carried from the sick room.

"Don't be a dope," Celeste said. "That's my powder box."

I was dumbfounded and the sergeant gaped as she told us. "I haven't the faintest where Mrs. Glass' powder went. When I left you two together I dashed up to my room for my box and sneaked it on to Hildegard's table. I guess she'd been too worried lying in bed with a ghost to notice it hadn't been there before. She knew I was allergic to easy money and thought she was being clever in getting me out of the room."

"Well, I'll be hanged," the sergeant ejaculated.

She made an affectionate grimace at his retreating back as he left the room to phone headquarters, and then her eyes were suddenly big and indignant with memory. "Fancy that Franklyn!" she said. "He might have choked you."

"But for your scream he would have."

"Well, it's all right now," she said. "They'll be giving you the keys of David's cell."

"I hardly know how to say this, Celeste," I said. "About Cynthia Warren . . ."

"I'm not thin-skinned," she told me. "I think I'm glad Hildegard spiked my guns." She grinned. "It would never have done for the sergeant." She regarded me quizzically. "You know something? Old Cyn was up to no good that night, but it doesn't matter now, does it?"

I didn't care what Cynthia had done or why she had been frightened enough to allow herself to be blackmailed. All that mattered was that now David would be free.

.

Three days later Hildegard died and in three more a For Sale notice was posted outside Warriewood. David was staying with Dr. Ellershaw, and I was ready dressed, about to leave the house, when there was a knock on the door. I was startled to see Cynthia Warren on the verandah.

"Won't you come in, Cynthia?" I said. "You won't remember me but I am Melita Winsor."

There was no more than a flicker of interest in her pale eyes. She said, "Inspector Hack told me all that happened. You were very brave." She was irresolute. "I really came to see Celeste."

I explained that Celeste was shortly to be married and had already gone north to get acquainted with her fiance's people.

"But she'll be back?" she asked, and I am sure she was disappointed.

"I doubt it," I told her. "Her husband is being moved. Promoted, I believe. He's a policeman."

"A policeman?" She was looking so poorly I begged her to come in, but she refused. Instead she sat on the cane lounge.

"You have nothing to fear from Celeste," I said. "You must have heard of Hildegard's confession."

She nodded. "Celeste thinks I killed my aunt."

"Thought," I corrected.

"Did she tell you?" she asked.

I am not free of the Pandora touch. "A little."

Her gloved hands made a nervous, washing movement. She said, "David should be grateful to me, Melita. I destroyed a letter Aunt Mary wrote to the lawyer disinheriting him."

"But why should she have done that?" I asked, surprised.

"Someone had told her about David and Mrs. Clanmorgan," she told me. "Hildegard, I think. In the letter Aunt instructed the lawyer to transfer David's five thousand pounds to Franklyn."

She hesitated. "If Franklyn had inherited five thousand pounds he would have left Warriewood for ever, and at the time, I couldn't have borne that. Aunt was dying, but she would have had time to sign the new will."

She stared at her gloves, a prisoner of the past, and it was some moments before she continued.

"I think Celeste saw me enter Aunt Mary's parlor and come out with one of her cushions. I was going to smother my aunt, Melita, but when I switched on the light, ready if she woke with some horrid pretence of making her more comfortable, she was staring at me, accusing, but already dead with a cord about her throat."

The last words were a whisper. The telephone bell from the house came harshly interrupting, and I was glad of the respite.

Dr. Ellershaw was on the wire. He said, "I go on vacation in a few days to my mother's home in the country. A lovely spot with hills and dales. A river even. I'm taking David along. I want him to live quietly for a couple of months." He cleared his throat. "But he'll need companionship, and I'm afraid I won't be able to watch him guard his sylvan dales for more than a fortnight. I wondered whether you'd be free." He added dryly, "My mother makes a marvellous chaperon." While I was hesitating breathless with the proposal, he clinched it. "I've already spoken to David. He thinks it a wonderful idea."

I forgot Cynthia might hear me. I forgot everything in the rosy prospect. "Doctor, I'm so happy!" I cried.

When I went outside the verandah was unoccupied. Cynthia was walking slowly up the garden path. Wherever she was going, whatever she intended, I knew Warriewood would never see her again.

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Continuing The Balcony

from page 10

"Good gad!" said father.

Mother appeared at the door. "There's a telegram just come for you, dear." She handed it to father. "What's this about Rose, Sallie?"

Sallie repeated the information.

Mother exclaimed, "But that's preposterous! The balcony legends have gone to your head. Rose wouldn't elope."

"But she has, mummie. That's what she was finishing the nightgown for."

"Darling, she couldn't elope in a nightgown! Not even Rose——"

"Quiet! Quiet!" shouted father from the bed. "Listen to this, my darlings. Just listen to this. Simpsons are offering me a contract for my book. Simpsons! Just when I'd given up hope. Why, it'll be a best seller in no time. We'll change our minds about converting Fairfields into flats. We'll buy back the orchard. We'll keep the balcony after all."

"No, we won't," said mother inexorably. "Darling, I'm terribly glad about the book. Terribly glad. But that balcony's a menace. It's lost us Rose and it's nearly killed you. It's got to go before it does anything to Sallie."

Sallie did a rapid pirouette. "It can't do anything to me. I have my career. It has nothing to say for careers."

It wasn't until the evening of that day that the excitement of it all wore off and Sallie began to feel very lonely indeed. Father had exhausted discussing what he would do with his imaginary fortune, and mother, after endless telephoning, had located Rose at last and grudgingly told her to come home and let her parents have a look at their son-in-law.

Everything was all right for everybody, but nevertheless she hated going to bed alone. She felt extraordinarily lost, as if fate, in this hand-out of benefits had quite forgotten her. She had practised a new dance until she was exhausted, and now she had tumbled into bed, weary, sad, and inclined to weep.

It was a still night with no pouring rain to blot out any sound. So that when the clear melodious voice floated up from outside every note was clearly audible.

Sallie sat upright, rigid. Bill. Singing for Rose! She had forgotten to tell him not to come, that Rose had organised her own happiness.

"Overhead the moon is gleaming . . . ," came the song gaily, confidently.

Poor Bill, anticipating the glimpse of Rose's lovely face. Sallie sprang out of bed, thrust her arms into a wrap and ran on her bare feet down the passage and out on to the balcony.

"Bill!" she called.

She leaned over the side and saw him standing there, his face upturned, the moonlight making his fair hair silver.

He stopped singing and she said rapidly, "Rose is gone. I'm awfully sorry. I forgot to let you know. Really, I'm sorry. You have a lovely voice, but you're wasting your time."

"Your tiny feet are frozen," he sang softly, looking up at her.

She leaned further over. "Bill, darling——" She got no further, for with a sharp cracking the delicate rusted fretwork gave and the side of the balcony began to collapse.

Sallie lost her balance and hung in mid-air, clinging frantically to the remnants of the wall.

"Don't move!" shouted Bill. "Hold on. I'm coming."

It seemed an age before he was there, leaning over to lift her back to safety.

"What did I say?" he panted. "This old balcony is a death-trap. It comes down to-morrow. Darling, could you ever do anything as uncomplicated as loving me?"

Sallie lay in his arms, thinking that the freckles on the end of his nose, by moonlight, were quite irresistible.

"But you don't mean it. You came to sing to Rose."

"Who put the ladder up for Rose last night? What am I around this place? A property man or a street singer?"

"You knew about Rose!" Sallie exclaimed. "Then you were singing to me. To me!"

"And to-morrow the balcony comes down," he reminded her.

She acquiesced meekly. "Yes. To-morrow it comes down. Because now it doesn't matter." She curled her bare toes. "There will be no Archer girls left."

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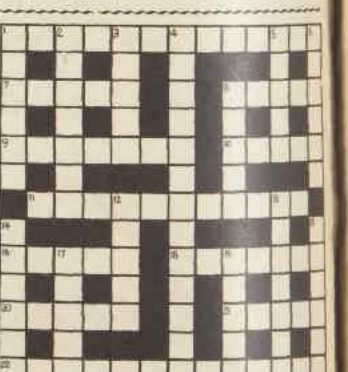
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THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Before you enter university you have to tilt our maniac (13).
7. I and you in a lot; use it for wiping (5).
8. A pith of the matter and feed the live stock (5).
9. Too many words, yet inwardly can be sober (7).
10. Cast metal changed to gin (5).
11. A twine cord badly sent as styptic medicines (11).
16. Approaches with inside listeners (5).
18. Mere hot as speculative truth (7).
20. Runnels are evils (5).
21. Rid the heart of a just married girl (5).
22. Biceps rule Vic (anagr., 6, 7).

Solution will be published next week.



Solution to last week's crossword.

DOWN

1. Reason to act which turns Tom to vie (6).
2. As regards to hospital divisions (7).
3. Really icy home (5).
4. Number one mixed in a stoned international organisation (6, 7).
5. Good on cakes, necessary on 3 down (5).
6. Droop consumed nut (6).
8. No wonder it's burning, the noble is nothing but wood (5).
12. Flowers who waged wars (5).
13. The last stations in merit (7).
14. Beguile in French turns part of measure electricity (6).
15. Before noon. French father is short, but as much as you like (2, 3).
17. Short, but as much as you like (2, 3).
19. Day of fasting with the end (5).

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Fashion PATTERNS

FASHION PATTERNS and Needlework Notions may be obtained immediately from Fashion Patterns Pty. Ltd., 645 Harris St., Ultimo, Sydney (postal address Box 4080, G.P.O., Sydney). Tasmanian readers should address orders to Box 66-D, G.P.O., Hobart. New Zealand readers to Box 466, G.P.O., Auckland.

Beginners' Pattern

F2492.—Beginners' pattern for a small girl's suspender skirt and long-sleeved blouse. Sizes 4, 6, 8 and 10 years, 20in., 22in., 24in., 27in., and 31in. lengths. Requires 1¼yds. 36in. material for skirt, and 1yds. 36in. material for blouse. Special price complete, 2/-.

F2485. — An attractive choice for wool. Note pretty, soft neckline. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3¼yds. 54in. material. Price, 5/6.

F2491. — Smart topper coat designed with the new season's square-cut silhouette. Sizes 32in to 38in. bust. Requires 3yds. 54in. material. Price, 5/6.

F2493. — Teenage suit with chic contrasting jacket trim. Sizes 30in. to 36in. bust. Requires 4yds. 54in. material and 1yd. 36in. contrast. Price, 5/6.

F2490.—Tailored slacks with new line turtle-necked top. Sizes, slacks 26in. to 32in. waist measurement; separate top sizes, 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 2yds. 36in. material for slacks and 1yds. 54in. material for top. Price complete, 4/6.

F2494.—One-piece day-time dress with wrist-hugging batwing sleeves. The skirt features grouped pleats. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3¼ yds. 54in. material. Price, 3/6.







NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS

No. 418. — APRON AND THREE POT-HOLDERS

A practical bib-apron with a plain pocket trim matched to the holders. The apron is obtainable cut out ready to make in Bonnie Prince striped haircord. The color choice includes red and white, green and white, yellow and white, blue and white, pink and white. The pocket and pot-holders are made in plain headcloth in a contrasting color. Size, medium. Price, 12/11 complete. Postage and registration, 1/8 extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. All Needlework Notions over 6/11 sent by registered post.





No. 421.—LUNCHEON SET

An attractively designed set featuring a flower motif. The mats and matching serviettes are obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider on heavy cream Irish linen, and on fine Irish linen in pink, sky-blue, lemon, green, and white. The centre mat measures 15in. by 15in.; plate mat, 11in. by 9in.; cup and saucer mat, 8in. by 8in. Set of nine pieces comprising 1 centre mat, 4 plate mats, 4 cup-and-saucer mats. Price, 19/11. Postage and registration, 1/8 extra. Set of thirteen pieces comprising 1 centre mat, 6 plate mats, 6 cup-and-saucer mats. Price, 32/6. Postage and registration, 1/10 extra. The serviettes are obtainable to match, size 12in. by 11in. Price, 1/6 each. Postage, 3d. extra.

No. 419.—SLIP AND SCANTIES SET

The pretty, lace-trimmed set is obtainable cut out ready to make in rayon crepe-de-chine. The color choice includes pale pink, sky-blue, white, and green. The lace edging is supplied. Sizes: 32in. and 34in. bust, 30/6; 36in. and 38in. bust, 31/11. Postage and registration, 1/8 extra. Sizes: Scanties, 24½in., 26in., 28in., 30in., and 32in. waist measurements, 14/6. Postage and registration, 1/4 extra.

No. 420.—SMALL GIRL'S DRESS AND MATCHING PANTIES

The dress and panties, with full, easy-to-follow instructions for making, are obtainable cut out ready to make. The material is cesora. The color choice includes pink, green, maize, and cream. Dress sizes, 2 years, 18in. length. Price, 26/11. 3 years, 19in. length. Price, 28/9. 4 years, 20in. length. Price, 29/11. Postage and registration, 1/8 extra. Panties sizes: 2 years, 10/6; 3 years, 11/-; 4 years, 11/6. Postage and registration, 1/4 extra.

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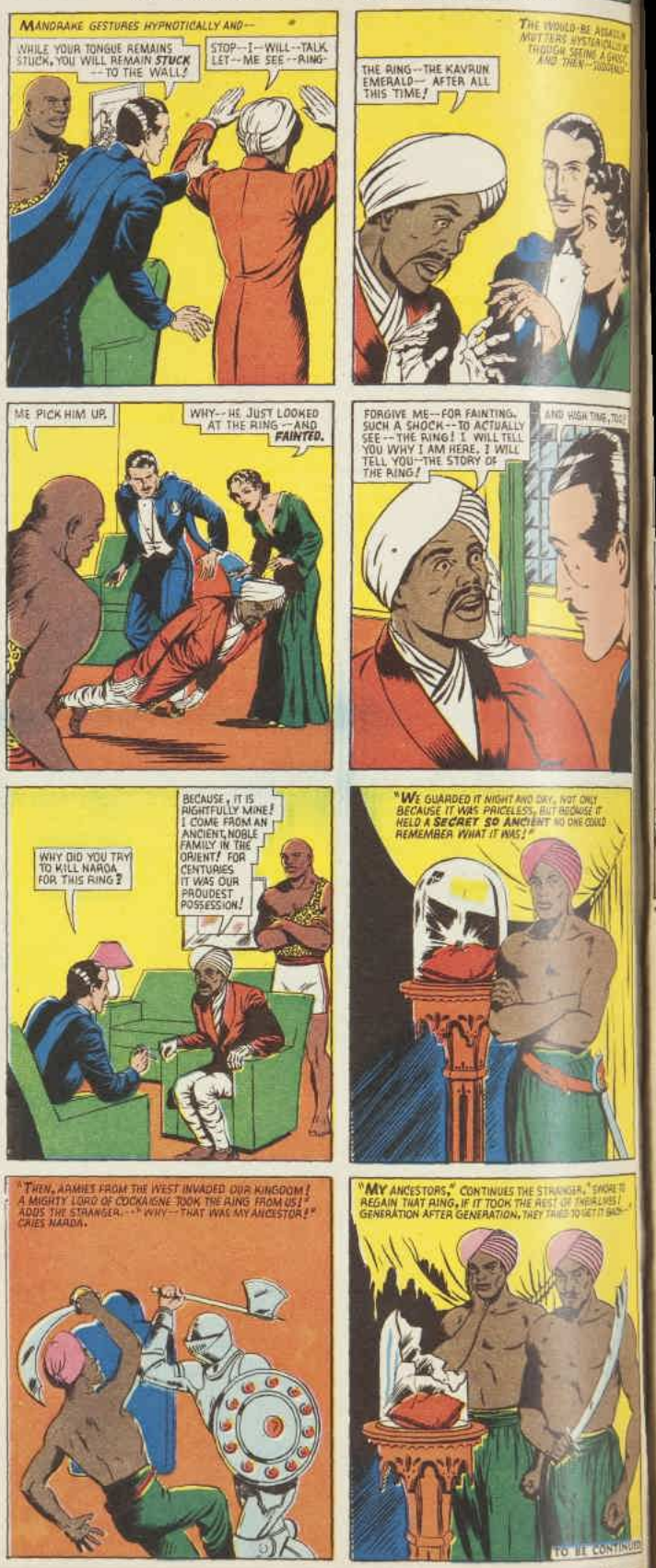
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MANDRAKE: Master magician,
LOTHAR: His giant Nubian servant, and
PRINCESS NARDA: Undergo a series of mysterious accidents. Narda blames her emerald ring, a priceless heirloom which has brought disaster to all who have worn it. Later, Mandrake surprises a would-be assassin in Narda's room. He escapes, but is captured by Lothar. Mandrake suspects the man of trying to steal the ring, and accuses him of causing the accidents. The man refuses to speak. NOW READ ON:



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At last I'm free to look after my little family— thanks to Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids



This human story will interest many sufferers who should be enjoying radiant health

The whole thing started four months ago, when I was advised to take Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment.
Gone is the pain in my knees. Gone is the crippling of my hands that refused to allow me to dress or undress myself. Gone is that dreadful depression and hopelessness that surely was getting me down. Gone the dreadful wakeful nights. Gone are the nights when I was barricaded up with pillows—pillows under my knees; they were so swollen and sore I could not stand the pressure one on the other. Gone is the pillow I had to have on my chest to rest the painful arm, as it was too sore to lie on . . . For the first time in a good many years, at last I'm free from pain—free to look after my little family. Many thanks to Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids for my new happiness.


Four months ago my hands were so useless I couldn't dress myself.


A dreadful depression and hopelessness was getting me down.


Sleepless at night with pain, I had to have pillows under my swollen knees and arms.


Now I can enjoy myself and do my work again.

If YOU suffer backache, rheumatism, neuritis, lumbago, sick headaches, Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids will help you, too!

—as they helped this young mother and her family. Theirs is the story of thousands of other Australians. Rheumatism, Backache, Sciatica, Lumbago, Stiffness in muscles and joints, Kidney and Bladder Weakness, Dizziness, Headaches and Simple High Blood Pressure are so common to-day that these and kindred ailments cost Australians approximately £25,000,000 a year. Much suffering and loss can be ended by helping your bloodstream to wash away crippling everyday poisons with a course of Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids.

How Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids act

Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment cleanses your body of the germs and poisons that rob you of your natural health and energy and which so often cause Headaches, Dizziness, Simple High Blood Pressure, Rheumatics, Kidney and Bladder trouble, Backache, and similar aches and pains. In these times of stress, Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment will restore you to normal good health and keep you fit and well to enjoy your life as you should. Start Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment to-day and see how your tiredness, your aches and pains are quickly relieved, leaving you filled with new energy and cheerfulness.

Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids are safe and sure

They are a natural prescription, a great medicine containing Thionine. They are a tried and proven family treatment that has brought relief to generations of Australians from the painful, crippling poisons of bacteria and uric acid. If you, or yours, suffer in this way, get a flask of Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids to-day and start a course of this famous treatment. Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids will quickly relieve you of that unhappy depressed feeling—those aches and pains that are sapping your strength—and give you a new lease of life and youthful energy.



Loss of some of your youthful suppleness is often the first sign of uric acid accumulating in your muscles and joints. In such cases as these, Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids are a valuable treatment for cleansing your body of the poisons that cripple you.

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